P. M. Friesen
Alt-Evangelische
Mennonitische
Brüderschaft
in
Russland
(1789-1910)

P. M. FRIESEN

THE MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD IN RUSSIA

(1789-1910)



P. M. Friesen

THE MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD IN RUSSIA (1789-1910)

How do you write the history of a movement when you are still a part of that movement? Whom do you believe when leading participants in those historical events disagree strongly not only on why things happened, but also on what happened? What imparts the ring of truth to a denominational history?

For P. M. Friesen the answer was a documentary history, letting the record speak for itself. Gathering historical documents over a period of twenty-five years, constantly transferring the information to his growing history of the Mennonite Church in Russia, he became the premier historian not only of the Mennonite Brethren but of the whole Mennonite community. Constantly revising, he finally let his *magnum opus* go to press—and even while it was on the press he was enlarging it and revising the data.

What appeared in 1911 as the *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruederschaft in Russland* (1789-1910) is clearly the most important single historical document to emerge from the Mennonite community in Russia. That is why this translation is so significant not only to scholars but any Mennonite interested in this important chapter in Mennonite history.

Historian Cornelius J. Dyck, director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, Elkhart, Indiana, comments, "Thus it is that we have before us not only a history of the early years of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia, but a fascinating documentary and interpretive account of the entire Mennonite experience in Russia from the time of their first migration to the time of the publication of the volume in 1911."

P. M. Friesen was truly a remarkable man. He knew both German and Russian well and taught in both languages. He had also done extensive work in history, giving the Lord a unique "vessel unto honor". His irenic spirit, combined with a painstaking attention to detail, has provided succeeding generations of Mennonites with an outstanding example of the professional historian at his best.

The same painstaking attention to detail has characterized those who worked on this translation. Dr. J. B. Toews, Executive Director of the Historical Commission of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, was assisted by a total of almost thirty people in the initial translation. A smaller group of very able Mennonite scholars was active in the final translation and editing process. They have produced a readable translation that retains the distinctive flavor of the original, a notable achievement.



Tsar Nicholas II



Tsarina Alexandra

PETER M. FRIESEN

THE MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD IN RUSSIA (1789-1910)

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

TRANSLATION AND EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
J. B. TOEWS
ABRAHAM FRIESEN
PETER J. KLASSEN
HARRY LOEWEN

(2. REVISED EDITION, 1980)

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

1980

Translated from
Alt-Evangelische Mennonitsche Bruederschaft in Russland (1789-1910) im Rahmen der mennonitischen Gesamtgeschichte
(Halbstadt, Raduga, 1911)

Translation Copyright©1978 by Board of Christian Literature,
General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
4824 E. Butler, Fresno, California 93727

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

Library of Congress # 78-52664

Printed in Canada for the Board of Christian Literature
by Christian Press, Winnipeg

Distributed by

Christian Press
159 Henderson Highway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2L 1L4

Mennonite Brethren Publishing House
135 North Main
Hillsboro, Kansas 67063

PREFACE

The publication of an English translation of P. M. Friesen's authoritative historical work represents the fruition of years of effort. For well over a decade various interested groups and persons have discussed the desirability of translating the large volume; only recently, however, were specific plans formulated.

A significant step forward was taken when the Historical Commission of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church recommended translation and publication. The Board of Christian Literature, to whom this recommendation was presented, concurred and now asked the Historical Commission to implement the suggestion. Thereupon the Commission requested its Executive Director, J. B. Toews, to explore possibilities for translating the book and also for financing such a venture. It was largely because of his untiring efforts and dynamic leadership that the dream became reality.

Gradually, an overall strategy was developed. Several groups of translators began the arduous task of preparing preliminary drafts of translations. When these had been completed, an editorial and translation committee, composed of J. B. Toews, Abraham Friesen, Peter J. Klassen and Harry Loewen, reviewed and revised the entire manuscript. John B. Toews (Calgary) also read the manuscript for accuracy, while Victor G. Doerksen devoted a great deal of time to a painstaking analysis of the entire document and made numerous changes in the interests of style and accuracy. The final product is thus the labor of many. The Commission felt that the translation of this massive history of Mennonites in Russia—itself the product of a specific assignment of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia in 1885—should involve a broad spectum of the brotherhood.

In his "Author's Preface" P. M. Friesen has given an enlightening report on some of the numerous problems encountered during the

twenty-five years when his manuscript was in preparation. He declared himself unsatisfied with the finished product, especially in terms of organization. It is thus not surprising that the translators were often forced to make choices between Friesen's style and organization, and currently preferred usage. In most cases it was decided to retain the flavor and form of the original.

It is the fervent hope of the Commission that the translation and publication of this, the most exhaustive study ever written on the Mennonite brotherhood in Russia, will stimulate and sustain a sense of historical awareness of the "acts and monuments" which have shaped the life of our people.

Fresno, California
On the 118th anniversary of the
founding of the
Mennonite Brethren Church

Peter J. Klassen, Chairman
Historical Commission of the
General Conference of
Mennonite Brethren Churches

FOREWORD

The nearly 200 year history of the Mennonites in Russia is still relatively unknown to historians today, including Mennonite historians who are not in that ethnic tradition. Because of linguistic, political, and geographical barriers it is hardly known even among the first generation descendants of the Mennonites from Russia now in the West. At the moment the field seems to belong primarily to those who emigrated from Russia, among whom interest in personal and group historical experiences has always been strong, and to a few Mennonite and other scholars.

It seems to me, however, that we are on the threshold of a new era of both scholarly and lay interest in this field. A substantial number of monographs on specific settlements have appeared during the past five years, as have memoirs, biographies, and reminiscences, usually in modest publications or serialized in the German language Mennonite press. Tours to the USSR are stimulating renewed interest in the heritage. A number of younger Mennonite scholars have mastered the German and Russian languages and are engaged in promising research and writing. And now, particularly, the translation of this landmark work by a group of competent scholars working under the direction of Dr. J. B. Toews of the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies at Fresno, has made available an abundance of documentary and interpretive material which will without doubt stimulate the research and writing of many others for years to come. For this, and simply for making the story available to those who do not read German or Russian, the translators of this volume have placed Mennonites, and others, deeply in their debt.

P. M. Friesen was a remarkable man. His knowledge of Russian Mennonite history was phenomenal, as was his skill and patience in research. Small wonder then that the volume took twenty-five years to complete instead of two weeks as one of the brethren predicted, and that

Friesen let it go to press very reluctantly even then, and immediately, though in ill health, began work on a supplement. How impoverished we would be in the loss of documents caused by war and revolution had it not been for this work of P. M. Friesen! One might only wish that he had placed this Mennonite story within the larger context of Russian history, which he undoubtedly knew equally well, but that might well have doubled the size of the manuscript and left the entire project incomplete by the time of his death. Some of this contextualizing can still be done today.

The methodology followed by the author compares favorably with present canons of good historical scholarship. Who among historians would not applaud his intention to "write the truth, both good and bad, even as the Bible does with David", or empathize with him after the first four years of work in his lament that he found it difficult to be objective because the graves were still too fresh to be opened? Who among historians would not recognize the truth of his comment that in 10-25 years, yes in 1-5 years, traditions form according to how people *wish* events to have happened, though reliable documents and even minutes of meetings they themselves attended and later signed, tell the story differently? How fortunate we are that Friesen, not trusting his own objectivity, decided to make it a documentary history, letting the record speak for itself. I find myself moved particularly by the irenic spirit of Friesen, evident throughout the entire work, but epitomized most succinctly in his *leitmotif—Ich suche meine Brueder*—I am seeking my brethren (people).

It was on a Sunday evening in the summer of 1886, the author tells us, that a minister friend communicated to him the request of the Mennonite Brethren in conference that he write the history of their first twenty-five years as a separate people. He accepted, and admitted to himself that he was probably the right man for the task. But he could not contain himself within the prescribed limits and before he was finished he and "my best secretary, my faithful wife" had compiled over 10,000 pages of material. From its original intention of being a history of the Mennonite Brethren movement the manuscript grew to be the most comprehensive and definitive history we have of all the Mennonites in Russia. The interrelatedness of events and their context led him inexorably from telling only part of the story to telling it all as best he could.

Thus it is that we have before us not only a history of the early years of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia but a fascinating documentary and interpretive account of the entire Mennonite experience in Russia from the time of their first migration to the time of the publication of the volume in 1911. It invites all Mennonites to read it as a part of their own history as a people, and it invites others too to read it

as an account of how God led in the history of this branch of His family, the Mennonites. and may the reader, in reading it, catch something of the spirit of humility, love and complete trust in Almighty God which so thoroughly characterized P. M. Friesen himself.

Cornelius J. Dyck, Director
Institute of Mennonite Studies
Elkhart, Indiana

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The translation of a book the size, scope and complexity of P. M. Friesen's *History of the Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia* is at best a difficult task. Many have labored at this translation; they know best how difficult it has been and the time they have invested. Some twenty-two persons worked at the initial draft of the translation, many of whom had never attempted anything of this scope before. It should therefore come as no surprise to the reader that the results were often of very uneven quality, and much of the original work had to undergo extensive revision. We do not say this in order to diminish in any way the contributions of any individual; quite the contrary. For surely it was those translators who had no previous experience along these lines, and who often came from walks of life which do not normally involve such work, who worked hardest at the job of translating. To those who have often done this kind of work in the past, the translation was much easier. The Translation and Editorial Committee, which had the responsibility of producing the finished product, wishes to express its sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the translation, at whatever stage.

With this in mind, major contributions to the original translation were made by the following: Abraham Friesen, University of California at Santa Barbara; Peter J. Klassen, California State University at Fresno; John A. Toews, Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg; Jake Toews, Mennonite Educational Institute, Clearbrook; and John Wittenberg, Abbotsford High School. Other contributors to the translation were: Henry Born, Parkview Mennonite Brethren Church, Hillsboro; Abe Dueck, Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg; A. J. Klassen, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno; David Duerksen, West Kildonan Collegiate, Winnipeg; Jacob Froese, Winnipeg School System; Herbert Giesbrecht, Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg; Harold Jantz, Editor, *Mennonite Brethren Herald,* Winnipeg;

Hugo Jantz, Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg; Peter Klassen, Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg; Wendelin Mann, Winnipeg School System; William Neufeld, North Kildonan Mennonite Brethren Church, Winnipeg; Sig Polle, Columbia Bible Institute, Clearbrook; John Regehr, Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg; Abe Schellenberg, Winnipeg School System; Wiliam Schroeder, Winkler High School; William Schroeder, Winnipeg; Jacob Thielmann, Columbia Bible Institute, Clearbrook; Henry H. Voth, Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church, Winnipeg; Frank Wiens, Director of Social Services, Marion County, Hillsboro.

When the first draft had been completed, a Translation and Editorial Committee consisting of J. B. Toews, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, Peter J. Klassen, California State University, Fresno, Harry Loewen, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, and Abraham Friesen, University of California, Santa Barbara, met in Fresno in February of 1976 to review the various manuscripts. There it was decided that Abraham Friesen should work through the translations first and then send them on to Harry Loewen and Peter Klassen. As it turned out, however, so much of the translation had virtually to be redone, or extensively revised by Friesen, that both Peter Klassen and Harry Loewen were assigned sections to review as well. It was Friesen, however, who either retranslated or revised approximately half of the manuscript.

By September of 1976, the work of revision had progressed to such an extent that the first meeting of the Translation and Editorial Committee could be held in Fresno to begin a detailed comparison of the translation with the original. This was done by having one person read the translation while the rest followed the German original. At this meeting all four members of the committee were present. But the work could not be completed at this session and, since it was decided that some of the remaining sections still needed extensive work, another meeting was held between Christmas and New Years' of 1976-77. Harry Loewen could not be present at this meeting.

Upon completion of this phase of the work, the entire manuscript was read for style by all four members of the Committee, as well as by John B. Toews of the University of Calgary, and by Victor G. Doerksen of the University of Manitoba. The latter proved a particularly valuable critic, so much so that he was brought into the work at that point. The Committee—with the exception of Harry Loewen—then met to evaluate and collate these stylistic corrections. Once this was completed, the manuscript was turned over to the printers.

Abraham Friesen, Peter J. Klassen and Victor G. Doerksen then read the proofs. Because of the many people who have worked on the translation, the reading of the proofs has of necessity involved an attempt to systematize such things as the use of capitalization, brackets,

punctuation, etc., perhaps not with complete success. The name index was prepared by Peter J. Klassen and the subject index by Harry Loewen. Gerry (Mrs. Abraham) Friesen typed all of the work retranslated or revised by her husband, and Laurene (Mrs. Burton) Peters typed and retyped the entire translated manuscript, preparing it for the printers. Victor Schmidt, manager of the Christian Press, spent many hours interpreting the wishes of the Committee in the production of the book.

J. B. Toews deserves a special word of recognition. Without his initiative and guidance, this project might never have gotten off the ground. It was he who solicited the funds, guided it through its initial stages and was present at every meeting of the Committee, supplying a fund of invaluable first-hand information about the Russian Mennonite experience which aided immeasurably in making this a better translation. He read the proofs and inspired the rest of us.

Financial Contributors

As important as the work of the above mentioned individuals is, the publication of this translation would not have been possible without the financial contributions of individuals and institutions concerned to keep the memory of our past alive. The Kroeker Foundation of Winnipeg, on the strong recommendation of Wally Kroeker, Editor of the *Christian Leader*, provided a substantial part of the funds necessary to finance the translation. Other contributions were received from the following: C. A. DeFehr & Sons, Winnipeg; Redekop Lumber & Supply, Ltd., Winnipeg; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Block, Vancouver; Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Block, Vancouver; Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Klassen, Clearbrook; Mr. and Mrs. Ed Dyck, Abbotsford; Mr. and Mrs. John Wiens, Abbotsford; Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Jantzen, Vancouver; Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Funk, Clearbrook; Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Funk, Abbotsford; Culloden Mennonite Brethren Church, Vancouver. To all of these, the Translation and Editorial Committee expresses its most sincere thanks.

Glossary

dessiatine	a measure of land approximately 2.67 acres
M.B.	used throughout this volume to designate "Mennonite Brethren"
Reaumur	the thermometric scale in which 0° marks the freezing point and 80° the boiling point of water
verst	a measure of distance equaling approximately .67 of a mile
volost	a unit of local government comprising varying numbers of villages

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface iii

Foreword v

Acknowledgements ix

Glossary xii

Author's Preface xxvii

A.

THE ORIGINS OF THE MENNONITE MOVEMENT

I. The Formation of the Old Evangelical Brotherhood known as Anabaptists or Mennonites 1

II. Menno Simons 3

III. Persecutions of the Old Evangelical-Anabaptists Before, At and After the Time of Menno Simons 19

B.

THE DUTCH-PRUSSIAN ANABAPTISTS OR MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD

IV. The Anabaptists (Doopsgezinde) in Holland 29

V. The Mennonite Congregations in Prussia 41

VI. Customs and Character of the Mennonites as Seen by People of Other Faiths 74

C.

THE MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD OF DUTCH-PRUSSIAN ORIGIN IN RUSSIA 1789-1860

VII. The Emigration of Prussian Mennonites to Russia 87

VIII. Settling in Russia 91

IX. Unrest and Reform Efforts in the Molotschna Churches 92

X. Documentary Supplement to the History of the Settlement and Development of the Mennonite Brotherhood in South Russia to 1860 109

D.

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED CHRISTIAN ANABAPTIST MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH (M.B. CHURCH) OF 1860 IN THE MIDST OF THE SOUTH RUSSIAN MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD OF DUTCH-PRUSSIAN ORIGIN

XI. Introduction 201

XII. Pastor Wuest, the Great Revivalist, an Instrument of the Revival of the Molotschna Mennonites and a Promotor of the Brotherhood Movement 205

XIII. Alliance and Communion Fellowship Prior to the Organization of the M.B. Church 227

XIV. The Founding of the Independent M.B. Church of 1860 .. 230

XV. The Struggle of the M.B. Church to Attain the Rights and Status of a Legal and Independent Mennonite Church 233

XVI. The First Election of Ministers by the M.B. Church 242

XVII. Further Difficulties and Final Victory of the M.B. Church as a Legal Mennonite Congregation in the Midst of the South Russian Mennonite Brotherhood 244

XVIII. The "Free and Exuberant Movement" in the Organized M.B. Church and its Final Conquest 262

XIX. The Beginnings of the Mennonite Brethren Church in the Chortitza District known as the "Einlage Mennonite Brethren Church" 280

XX. The Introduction of Baptism by Immersion in the Mennonite Brethren Church and the Founding of the "Einlage" Congregation 284

XXI. Severe Hardships of the Young Einlage M.B. Church in Relation to the Total Mennonite Brotherhood of the Chortitza District 312

XXII. The Excesses of the Molotschna "Enthusiasts" Also Force Their Way into the Einlage M.B. Church—Its Suppression—the Kuban Settlement Discredited. Old Danzig 325

XXIII. Continued Attempts by Local Councils to Portray the Members of the Einlage M.B. Church as Political and Criminal Lawbreakers 327

XXIV. The Internal Organization and Growth of the Einlage M.B. Church to 1864 339

XXV. Documentary Supplements to the History of the South Russian Mennonite Brotherhood and Specifically of the M.B. Church to 1866 341

XXV.(2) Retrospect and Prospect: A Question Regarding the Direction Taken by the M.B. Church with Respect to the Reforms and Decisions of 1865 and the Further Development in the Lord "Toward all Believers" 453

XXVI. The Development of the Mennonite Brethren Church of the Chortitza District, from 1866 to 1872: That is, from Heinrich Neufeld's Departure to the First General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church 459

XXVII. The M.B. Church in the Molotschna and the Kuban from 1865/66 to 1872/73: From the "June Reform" to the First General Conference 467

XXVIII. First Annual Meeting of the Conference of the United Christian Anabaptist Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia on May 14-16, 1872 475

XXIX. The Mennonite Brethren Churches in Russia from 1872/73 to 1885: That is, until the 25th Anniversary 476

XXX. The Activity of the M.B. General Conference as a Body 1872-1885 514

XXXI. A Short History of the M.B. Church in Russia from 1885-1910 During the Second Quarter Century of its Existence 523

E.

MILITARY SERVICE AND THE ATTITUDE OF THE RUSSIAN MENNONITES TOWARD THE STATE AND THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA. EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

XXXII. Preamble: Is the "Nonresistant" Mennonite Unpatriotic? 575

XXXIII. Military Service and the Emigration of Russian Mennonites to America 586

F.

ISSUES CONCERNING MATTERS OF FAITH IN THE MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD OF RUSSIA AT THE PRESENT TIME (1905-1910)

XXXIV. New Apprehensions With Regard to Matters of Faith . . . 627

XXXV. Steps Taken for the Preservation of Maximally Unrestricted Intra-Church Independence of the Religious Community 629

G.

FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE MENNONITES OF RUSSIA

XXXVI. The Mission of the Older Mennonite Church 659

XXXVII. Foreign Missions of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Russia 674

H.

INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MENNONITES IN RUSSIA

XXXVIII. The Educational System 689

XXXIX. Welfare Matters 809

XL. Publications: Books and Periodicals 831

J.

GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION AND ECONOMIC-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MENNONITES OF RUSSIA FROM 1860 TO 1910

XLI. Geographic Expansion and Acquisition of Land 843
XLII. Trade and Industry—Properties 866

K.

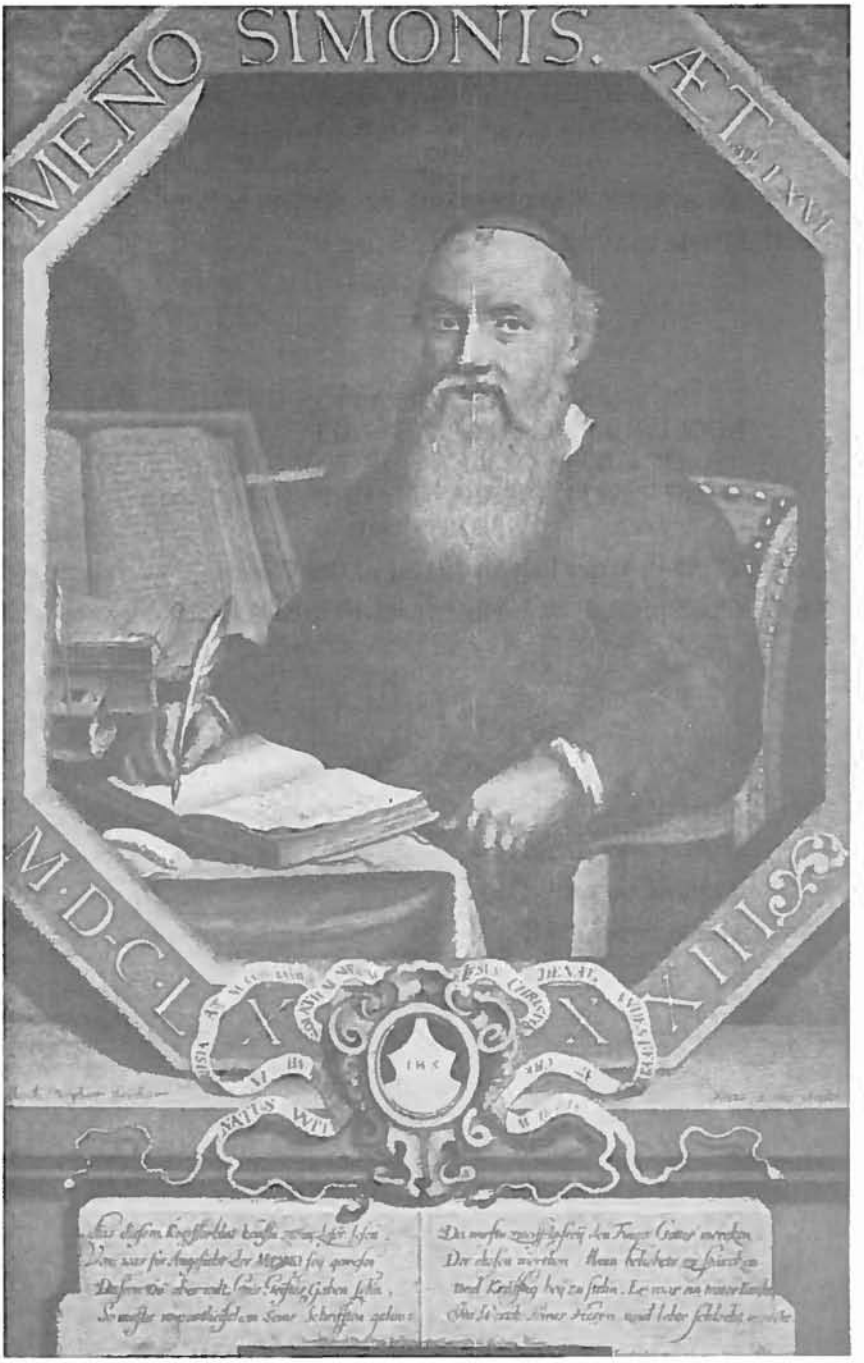
SUMMARY PRESENTATION OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL AND SPIRITUAL COURSE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLDER MENNONITE CHURCHES IN RUSSIA FROM 1860 TO 1910

XLIII. Statistics and Personal Data of the Clergy 885
XLIV. The Spiritual Character of the Churches and Clergy 928

L.

CONCLUSION

XLV. Conclusion 975
Footnotes 984
Subject Index 1043
Name Index 1060



Menno Simons (1496-1561)

List of Illustrations

1. Tsar Nicholas II — Frontispiece I
2. Tsarina Alexandra — Frontispiece II
3. Menno Simons (1496-1561) — xxvii
4. Menno Simons (preaching) — 12
5. The Menno Monument — 13
6. Old Evangelical Martyrs, before, during and after Menno's Time: — 26
   a) Torture — 26
   b) Martyrs in the Hague — 26
   c) Lysken Segerson is drowned — 26
7. a) Dirk Philips (1504-1570)
   First Elder in Danzig — 30
   b) Hans de Ries
   Author of the Dutch-Anabaptist Confession of Faith of 1580-1610 (*Confessio brevis*) and the Anabaptist hymn book of 1582 — 30
   c) Dr. Galenus Abrahams de Haan
   Elder in Amsterdam about 1650 — 30
   d) Pastor Johannes Deknatel,
   Amsterdam (d. 1759) — 30
8. a) Ohrlofferfelde Mennonite Church (since united with Ladekopp) in West Prussia — 44
   b) Ladekopp Mennonite Church (since united with Ohrlofferfelde) in West Prussia — 44
9. c) Affiliate of the Heubuden Mennonite Church, Marienburg, West Prussia — 45

10. Ladekopp Church Leaders in West Prussia, 1910. Back row: J. Wiens; A. Jansson; (d. H. Friesen, Ladekopp); J. Penner; J. Schroeder; E. Claassen, B. Andres; front row: J. Dyck; C. Jansson; Elder J. Neufeld; P. Penner 55

11. Ohrlofferfelde Church Leaders, 1910. Back row: P. Froese; J. Heidebrecht; (d. Elder J. Penner, Platenhof); H. Friesen; H. Mekelburger; front row: D. Mekelburger; Elder C. Neufeld; J. Quiring 56

12. Jakob Mannhardt, minister of the Mennonite Church, Danzig, 1836-1885. Founder of the *Mennonitische Blaetter* 66

13. Mennonite Church and Manse, Danzig 67

14. Tsarina Catherine II (1762-1796) 86

15. Hoeppner Monument on the Island of Chortitza 89

16. Bartsch Monument in the Rosental Colony near Chortitza 90

17. a) August Lenzmann (1823-1877) 161

b) David Hamm (d. 1884) 161

c) Johann Harder (d. 1876) 161

d) Peter Klassen (1825-1902) 161

e) Secondary School Teacher Heinrich Epp (1827-1896) 161

f) Minister Bernhard Harder (1832-1884) 161

18. Bernhard Harder Monument in the Cemetery of Neu-Halbstadt 162

19. Old-fashioned Farm Implements 177

20. c) Mennonite Farmers and their Russian Servants (the oldest man was still a serf) 178

21. a) Johann Cornies, Sr. 195

b) Heinrich Heese, Sr. 195

c) Heinrich Franz, Sr. 195

d) Philipp Wiebe 195

22. Cornies Monument in Ohrloff 196

23. a) Pastor Eduard Wuest (1817-1859) 214

b) Minister August Liebig (born in 1836 in Bernstein/ Neumark) 214

24. a) Johann Claassen, Liebenau-Kuban (1820-1876) 279

b) Heinrich Huebert, first elder of the M.B. Church (1810-1895) 279

c) Jakob Reimer, Felsental-Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld (1817-1891) 279

d) Abraham Unger, Einlage, first elder of the Einlage M.B. Church (1820-1880) 279

e) Philipp Isaak, Tiege (1832-1879) 279

f) Minister Johann Johann Wieler (1840-1890) 279

25. Temporary home of Elder Heinrich Huebert and the itinerant minister Christian Schmidt in Blumenort, Molotschna, about 1870 280

26. a) Church (and school) of the Einlage M.B. Church in Andreasfeld (First church building of the M.B. Church in Russia) 487

b) Old M.B. Church in Rueckenau 487

c) New M.B. Church in Rueckenau 487

d) M.B. Church in Welikokniashesk ("Wohldemfuerst"), Kuban 488

e) M.B. Church in Einlage 488

f) Baptism at the M.B. Church in Rueckenau 488

27. a) M.B. Church Nikolaipol in Andreievka, Russian-Turkestan 569

b) M.B. Church in Lugovsk, "Neu Samara" 569

28. Tsar Alexander II (1855-1881) 574

29. a) Monument in Neu-Halbstadt, 1854 (during the time of Podwod) 581

b) Centennary monument of the Chortitzar Mennonites in Chortitza (1789-1889) 582

30. a) The Old-Berdiansk forestry service, formerly the "model plantation" of the Molotschna Mennonite district managed by Peter Fast and son from the time of Johann Cornies, Sr., until 1880: The detachment marching off to work 619

b) The Phylloxera-detachment on the south coast of the Crimea, at their devotions 619

c) The Phylloxera-detachment on the south coast of the Crimea: Pastoral visitation 619

d) Hermann Abram Bergmann, Member of the third Duma 620

e) David Johann Claassen, Authorized agent of the Mennonite churches of Russia in matters pertaining to the forestry service and of the Molotschna Mennonites in school matters 620

31. a) Retired Elder, Bernhard Peters (b. 1817), Elder of the Mennonite Church, Margenau, Molotschna, 1861-1887 647

b) Retired missionary, Heinrich Dirks, Elder of the Gnadenfeld Mennonite Church 647

c) Isaak Dyck, Elder of the Chortitza Mennonite Church since 1896 647

d) Heinrich Unruh, Elder of the Halbstadt Mennonite Church since 1896 648

e) Johann Klassen, Elder of the Kronsweide Mennonite Church since 1907 648

f) Mennonite Church at Schoensee, Molotschna (dedicated 1909) 648

32. The Commission for Matters of Faith reappointed by the General Mennonite Conference at Schoensee in October, 1910 651

a) Abram Goerz, Elder of the Mennonite Church, Ohrloff-Neukirch 651

b) H. J. Braun, Authorized minister of the M.B. Church, Rueckenau 651

c) D. H. Epp, Minister of the Chortitza Mennonite Church in Ekaterinoslav 651

33. Missionary Heinrich Dirks with his family and Batta Christian in the year 1881 661

34. a) Johann Fast of Ohrloff, Molotschna, Missionary in Java 662

b) Peter Janss (1820-1904), first missionary of the Anabaptists since 1851, translater of the Bible into Javanese, Knight of the Royal Dutch Order of the Lion 662

35. a) Missionaries (Russian and American) of the Nalgonda Mission 1899 677

36. Nalgonda Mission Station

37. a) First building of the Halbstadt Secondary School in Alt-Halbstadt (built about 1835) 725

b) Second building of the Ohrloff Secondary School (built about 1860) 725

c) Second building of the Halbstadt Secondary School in Neu-Halbstadt (built in 1860) 726

d) New building of the Halbstadt Secondary School in Neu-Halbstadt (built in 1895) 726

38. a) Peter Neufeld (1824-1909), Teacher of the Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld Secondary Schools. Founder of the Raduga printing press 729

b) Minister Kornelius Unruh (1849-1910), Teacher of the Halbstadt Secondary School 1870/71, of the Ohrloff School 1873-1905 729

c) Heinrich Franz, Jr. (1847-1894), Teacher of the Halbstadt Secondary School, 1874-1880; Founder of the factory Franz and Schroeder 729

d) Johann Johann Braeul, Teacher of the Ohrloff Secondary School from 1875 to the present (December, 1910) 729

39. Minister Wilhelm Neufeld, Secondary school teacher, Gnadenfeld and Halbstadt (1881-1911) 730

40. a) Wilhelm Wilhelm Penner, Teacher of the Chortitza Secondary School 1874-1881 758

b) Minister Peter Martin Riediger, Teacher of the Chortitza Secondary School 1879-1892 758

c) Abram Abram Neufeld (1862-1909), Principal of the Chortitza Secondary School 1890-1905, Director of the Business School in Berdiansk, 1905-1909 758

d) Minister Peter Johann Penner, Teacher of religion at the Chortitza Secondary School from 1892 to the present (December, 1910) 758

41. a) Secondary School in Chortitza 763

b) Secondary School in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna 763

c) Halbstadt Girls' School at Neu-Halbstadt 764

d) Chortitza Girls' School 764

e) Ohrloff Girls' School at Tiege, Molotschna 764

43. a) Old village school in Margenau-Molotschna (built before the time of Cornies) 782

b) Present village school in Margenau (in the style of Cornies) 782

c) New village school in Rosenort, Molotschna (built in 1895) 782

44. a) Andreas Voth (1821-1885), Currently Chairman of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board 800

b) Elder Abram Goerz, Representative of the Council of Church Leaders in the Molotschna Mennonite School Board 800

c) Johann Karl Klatt, Formerly President of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board 800

d) Peter Heinrich Heese, Formerly President of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board 800

45. a) Maria Deaf-Mute School in Tiege, Molotschna (Street view) 811

b) Maria Deaf-Mute School in Tiege, Molotschna (Rear view) 812

46. a) Muntau Hospital (Franz Walls) 817

b) Deaconess Home *Morija* in Neu-Halbstadt 817

c) Ohrloff Hospital 817

d) Orphanage in Grossweide, Molotschna 818

e) Psychiatric Institution "Bethany" in Alt-Kronsweide near Einlage 818

47. a) Home for the Aged of the Halbstadt Volost on the Kuruschan (Molotschna) 823

b) Home for the Aged in Rueckenau (Molotschna) 824

48. a) Minister Abram J. Kroeker, Editor of the *Friedensstimme* 836

b) Minister David H. Epp, Editor of the *Botschafter* 837

49. a) Area Administrative Offices in Chortitza 839

b) Area Administrative Offices in Halbstadt (rear view) 839

c) Area Administrative Offices in Velikokniashesk (Wohldemfuerst), Kuban 839

d) Old Mennonite estate home in Southern Russia (Juschanlee) 840

e) Modern Mennonite estate home in Southern Russia (Steinbach) 840

f) Modern Mennonite home in Neu-Halbstadt 840

50. a) Old farm yard in Chortitza 849

b) Modern farm yard in Chortitza 849

c) Old building on small farm yard near Chortitza 849

d) Farm of Johann Wiebe in Ohrloff (formerly Johann Cornies, Sr.) 850

e) Old farm yard in Rueckenau, Molotschna 850

f) Farm yard of a Mennonite Elder in Southern Russia 850

51. a) Mennonite home in Russian Turkestan 863

b) A scene from south-west Siberia (Mennonite, Kirghiz and Cossack). From a water color by secondary teacher J. H. Janzen, Ohrloff 863

52. a) Modern Mennonite Agricultural Implements 867

b) Modern Mennonite Vehicles 868

53. a) Peter Lepp, Chortitza 873

b) Steam Mill Owner, Jakob Niebuhr 873

c) Johann Abraham Friesen, Einlage, died in Rueckenau 873

d) The Lepp & Wallmann Factory in Chortitza, founded 1850 874

54. a) Windmill 877

b) Two-shared Plow 877

c) First "Dutch" Mill, Blumenort, Molotschna 878

d) Steam Mill in Halbstadt (part of the first starch factory complex) 878

55. a) Small Farm with Smithy, Molotschna 881

b) Franz & Schroeder Factry in Neu-Halbstadt (formerly the silk processing factory) 881

c) "New" Starch Factory in Muntau, Molotschna 882

56. a) Mennonite Church, Chortitza 889

b) Mennonite Church, Kronsweide 889

c) Mennonite Church, Einlage (Kitschkas) 889

d) Mennonite Church, Ohrloff, Molotschna 890

e) Mennonite Church, Gnadenfeld, Molotschna 890

f) Mennonite Church, Neu-Halbstadt, Molotschna 890

57. a) Retired Elder Aron Lepp (b. 1829). Elder of the M.B. Church, Einlage, 1876-1903 919

b) Retired Elder Daniel Fast (b. 1826). Elder of the M.B.

Church, Kuban, 1877-1901 919

c) Jakob Jantz (b. 1834), Elder of the M.B. Church, Friedensfeld (Miropol) since 1875 919

e) David Duerksen (1850-1910), Elder of the M.B. Church, Spat-Schoental, Crimea, 1899-1910 919

e) Peter Peter Schmidt of Steinbach (1860-1910), Co-elder of the Molotschna Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood 971

58. a) Jakob Reimer, Itinerant Minister of the M.B. Church 971

b) Gerhard Harder, Itinerant Minister of the Mennonite General Conference 971

c) Abram Wall, Itinerant Minister of the M.B. Church 971

d) Jakob Quiring, Itinerant Minister of the Mennonite General Conference 971

59. a) Minister P. M. Friesen (b. 1849), Author of the *Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia,* teacher and principal of the Halbstadt Secondary School, 1873-1886 983

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

"It's been a long, long time!"

It was on a Sunday evening in the midsummer of 1886, shortly before my departure from Halbstadt after I had resigned my position at the Secondary School there, that my friend and former colleague, the now deceased minister Johann Johann Wieler, approached me with the duly recorded decision of the Rueckenau M.B. Church to commission me to write the history of the M.B. Church during its first twenty-five years. At the same time he turned a portion of the historical material over to me, charged me to collect the necessary further material, to question the older brethren for information, and presented me with fifty rubles travelling money as well as a part of the payment intended for me. The way in which these people thought of the size of the history and the length of time it would take to compile the material was expressed by one prominent member of the congregation—an old (former) Area Administrative Officer—in the following words: "That is a nice piece of work exactly suited for Friesen. But he will also earn handsomely from it, for he will complete it in fourteen days!" Similar but not quite such extreme thoughts were probably harbored by most members of the fellowship. And the way in which they conceived the history was expressed by another, a common brother of the M.B. Church (who was expelled from the same a few years later and remained expelled because of an unfit life): "Well, then, you are going to write our history and prove conclusively that we are in the right and the 'church' in the wrong!" The unadorned honesty of these words so amazed me that I was lost for a rejoinder (which seldom happens). An important, totally different piece of advise was given me by the old Br. Jakob Reimer of Felsental, as he turned some important documents over to me with his blessing. "Write truth," he said, "the good and the bad, as the Bible did

concerning David!" These were the two great warnings which the God of my life gave me before the writing of my book. Should I write in the spirit of the first? Certainly not! But in the manner recommended by father Reimer—yes, that was right, but how difficult!

And the time? Instead of "fourteen days" it took twenty-five years! At the annual meeting of the Mennonite Brethren General Conference in Rueckenau of May, 1890, the author felt constrained to inform the meeting that he had committed an act of folly in already attempting to write the history of "these times." Nor did he care to state his reasons openly: "It was still too difficult to be objective." But by now the whole fellowship, which had undertaken the project at the request of the Rueckenau congregation, was already buzzing because of the "protracted delay of the history." A few people, whom I had initiated into and who understood the matter, represented me at the conference, and the latter accepted the collection of sifted, ordered, and elucidated material presented, through a recorded vote, as an adequate return for the money it had paid out. It declared that from now on author and conference were to stand on a free relationship to one another as far as work accomplished and remuneration extended were concerned. (The honorable conference has made a few small payments for various materials I have given them toward a "history of the M.B. Church," for which I express my thanks). Then, in 1900, it was decided to publish a very short "history" as a supplement to the "Confession of Faith," etc. (cf. p. 670); but due to a misunderstanding between the author and the conference—the consequence of delays in the mails—this was never brought to fruition. In 1902, for reasons mentioned on page 164, a somewhat larger piece was finally to be printed. But this too did not materialize, to the great joy of the author. God would not allow a "little hat to be built on chicken feet" (a Russian proverb).

And why, aside from the external hindrances, did the project take so long? For even I agreed more or less with the optimistic evaluation concerning my ability to write this "history" expressed by the old Area Administrative Officer and more or less shared by Wieler and all other interested parties! Had I not successfully completed a (even though not academic) specialized examination in order to teach the Russian language (and literature = history), general and Russian history and geography! Had I not taught these subjects for thirteen years and read quite widely in history and church history! At the same time I knew so many "old folks" personally from the Mennonite Church as well as from amongst the "brethren." I remembered a great many incidents from the "olden days" I had myself experienced (although not as a boy or youth). Yes, but now the Low German Mennonite proverb—"The untried person speaks without thinking"—was to come true! I visited many "old folks," loving uncles and brothers. They contradicted one another: one said this,

another that. They contradicted themselves: they narrated things differently than they were given in the minutes of meetings they had themselves signed, differently than their own letters and "reports" (given to me by themselves or through the Rueckenau church council). In a period of ten-to-twenty-five years (indeed, in one-to-five years!) traditions regarding these events had developed in rural areas which interpreted the events the way they wished them to have happened! And they were quite honest in all this. Nor was there any difference between those belonging to the Mennonite Church or the "brethren" in this regard. Under these circumstances it was not easy to write in opposition to the word of the "common brother" (as a dishonest historical maxim) and in line with father Reimer's principle of truth. Emotions and historical conscience came into severe conflict. Time and again I listened to dozens of honorable men and women from the various factions and read and reread their documents—and a great sorrow overcame me! I could impossibly present loving old men of this or that faction in all their nakedness in a cold-blooded fashion during their lifetime, a nakedness of which they had themselves been unaware. Indeed, as I shall elaborate below in the delineation of my historical procedure, it became very difficult for me to treat men from the fellowship, who had already been in their graves for fifty years, in a truthful historical fashion: all of them have left a circle of admirers behind who see them in the light of a pious tradition. Their children and grandchildren live in our midst. To write contemporary history is a difficult task for one's psyche! I found a way out. I began by sorting the documents—hundreds upon hundreds of private and official papers—according to year and day and began to copy them into a "chronicle" with explanatory footnotes. After three months of work (after Halbstadt, I lived in the Kuban settlement of Wohldemfuerst for twenty months), I carefully packed up all my original documents and the copies I had made and, tired of the impression all the historical material from my immediate and personal surroundings had made upon me—which weighed down upon me like a mountain—I went on a series of trips. During the time of my stay at the Kuban I visited many Mennonite and other congregations, watching, listening, thinking, and constantly gathering material. Things I never dreamed existed came into my hands. Thus, because of the many interruptions, the "writing" also took longer than I had ever imagined. After a period of eight years as minister in Odessa, God gave me nearly two years of uninterrupted peace and quiet as a convalescent. During that time and with the help of my best secretary—my dear wife—I began to work on 5,000 pages of manuscript (to which, during my thirteen years in Sevastopol, again as much material was added), always in the same format of a "chronicle" (to the point of a diary) of our history. After constant expansion it finally turned, not into a "History of the M.B. Church," but into a

history of the Mennonites in Russia within the framework of the totality of Mennonite history, as the present title indicates.

With respect to my ecclesiastical, intellectual, and cultural position generally, I would request the reader who would like, from the outset, to know with whom he is dealing, to read pages 205, 301-303, 307, 453-454, 498, 543b, 631-636, 733-735, 748, 785, 787, 854, etc., and especially the concluding chapter, page 975 to the end, if he is so inclined.

Finally, in 1906, I once again presented my now essentially completed manuscript (about two-thirds the size of the present book) to the annual meeting of the M.B. Church through the oral and written explanation of two ministers, that is, two elders of the same church. I did this because the M.B. Church had, as its initiator, perhaps not a legal, but at least a moral right to the work. I asked the conference what it wanted to do with the "historical material" (in the original, of which a considerable part, though by far not the greatest amount, belonged to it). The meeting, by a recorded conference decision, declined any further participation and turned everything over to me personally.

In 1909, sick and condemned to die by the verdict of the doctors, I offered the handwritten materials to a younger man from our midst who had specialized in the study of history so that he might fashion something new from them. But he and another young specialist, together with the partners of the Raduga publishing firm (the latter renewing their plea), insisted that the book should be printed the way it was. As always, J. Ph. Isaak, my authorized agent in these matters, was actively involved. For a considerable time, so shortly "before my imminent death," I could not summon up the courage to take the responsibility for seeing the book through the press and all the criticism which was sure to follow from the publication of such a study upon myself. But God, who has led me in this matter, once again granted me strength and courage, and in the summer of 1809 I entered into an agreement with Raduga to publish the study. Instead of six months, the publication took two years; at times I was at fault, at times the publishers were at fault. Various circumstances caused me to increase the size of the book by half again that of the original—to a certain extent against the wishes of the publisher. During this two-year period I was forced to do most of my work in bed (half sitting, half lying—one learns how to do many things if one is forced to).

Inspite of the fact that it was constantly expanded, the composition of the study has retained the character of a "chronicle" employed from the beginning. Endless new "insertions," "appendices," etc., have not made an overview of the whole any easier to achieve and have made a proper relationship between the major and minor subdivisions a virtual impossibility. I have therefore attempted, by means of numerous references from paragraph to paragraph, to draw the thread of continuity

for the studious reader. Many sections had to be doubled and divided—# . . . (2), etc.—because of the above-mentioned insertions.

The exceedingly large size of that section of the book that deals with the M.B. Church, in comparison to the majority group, was a natural outgrowth of the original conception of the study as a specialized study of the M.B. Church. On the other hand, however, it also contains much that pertains to the total history of the Mennonites. When the study was expanded to include the history of all the Mennonites in Russia only very little could be eliminated from this specialized section without sacrificing much that was worthwhile, especially for the coherence, of the whole.

As far as the content is concerned, I wished to copy as much as possible from the mass of original material rather than write much myself. Not that this was easier for the author, but situations and personalities could be depicted more faithfully in this way than if the author had attempted to referee between them, intruding and allowing his personality to come to the fore, whether he desired to do so or not.

I have been at pains conscientiously to cite all the sources. Should I have omitted to do so in places, or should the copyrights have been unintentionally anywhere infringed upon, I most urgently beg to be excused and declare myself to be obligated to rectify every justifiable claim. I express my most sincere and heartiest thanks to all who have helped me directly or indirectly—some have done so most willingly.

With regard to our Mennonite history, the following was the fundamental principle of historical integrity: to say as much good as was possible and as much of the bad as we had to in order to remain truthful. Whenever I was forced to vex someone I was always grieved first before I could write down the troublesome part. I often battled these things for years.

I have already become aware of many mistakes. It is the duty of an open, objective criticism to point others out to me. Since, given the state of my health and the conditions existing in the Mennonite book market, it is impossible to think that I shall live to see a revised edition, I have already begun to prepare a supplemental volume (commercially totally independent of this book) entitled "Supplements and Corrections to the Old Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood." In this way I retain, as long as I am still alive and able to work, the discipline and custom of serving my fellowship as much as I can in the area of history, and the purchaser of the book, which has meanwhile become quite expensive, is not hurt through a partial loss of value by a (if possible!) second edition soon to follow upon the heels of the first. For a small price he can purchase the "Supplements and Corrections" and thus have the benefit of a revised edition. Another project underway is the continuation and completion (of the beginning, end, and parts in between) or my original "chronicle"

through the simple copying of many newly discovered and acquired unique documents. If at all, this study could naturally only be published in a very limited edition since it would only interest historians and researchers. A third project is the writing of smaller pieces such as biographies and the narration of episodes out of the life of the Russian Mennonites (like that of the "Mennonite Thief").

My attitude toward my Mennonite comrades according to the flesh as well as the faith is readily apparent in the book. Nevertheless I wish to add that I have acquired a measure of love and—if the expression is appropriate—patriotism for the "brotherhood" throughout the entire world I had not dreamed possible before. It is true that I have remained the same "Alliance Christian" that my life style and Christian experiences led me to become. But my soul is full of sympathy and interest for "our" little flock spread over the whole world. And during twenty-five years I would have answered the question, what I was doing with: "I seek my brethren!" in a very special sense. Nor did I wish to leave even the most meager, the most distant, the most insignificant, or the most estranged member of our Menno family unmentioned or unknown. Hence my widespread statistical researches in Russia, Europe, and America. And so I urgently request critiques, corrections, and reports so that I may provide corrections and fuller information in my supplemental volume.

As to the language! It was a particularly bitter disappointment that the hoped-for review of every printed sheet by an especially esteemed master of the language with regard to purity of style did not materialize. Conditions under which corrections were made difficult aggravated the situation even more so that much that is irritating with regard to style leers back at me from the printed page. To that I wish to add that, over a period of forty years as a consequence of my profession, the German and Russian languages have vied for supremacy with one another in me, and there was a time when my German did not want to flow properly. Add to that twenty-five years of work with literary sources nine-tenths of which can truly be said not to be classical!

Nor is the outward appearance enhanced by the large sections in fine print. But it was my passionate desire to present the reader, especially the researcher, with as much material as possible so that he could see how matters stood and stand. Without this book much would probably have been lost.

The purchaser will, I think, be thankful to the publisher above all for the many pictures which he has inserted in response to my never-ending requests. Where the text is inadequate, the pictures are often an excellent supplement. In this regard I hope to provide a few new things in my supplemental volume, especially with reference to Holland, Switzerland, South Germany, and America.

I alone am responsible for the opinions expressed in this book. The publishers very magnanimously stipulated that I was free to express my personal opinion at all times. They may well have desired to change many a presentation. But absolute independence was a **sine qua non** I took for granted.

As far as the great question regarding the origin of the Anabaptist movement is concerned, I have personally attempted to remain as neutral as possible in the issue of Waldensian origins; I have merely cited the observations of Menno, Deknatel, Reiswitz and Wadzeck, the Hutterian Brethren, etc. I had neither the space nor the learned tools—and hence the courage—to investigate the discoveries of Dr. Ludwig Keller in this regard. But then the general Anabaptist history merely constitutes the "frame of reference."

May the God of my life, Who in His grace allowed me to write this book, accompany it out into our small Mennonite world and anywhere else He may wish. In His perfection, might, and wisdom He will allow it to be useful as it is, where and how His holy Majesty sees fit. In His grace He will turn away any damage which it might bring because of its shortcomings. I bow myself in humility, adoration, and thanks before Him, my eternal Father.

P. M. Friesen

A.

THE ORIGINS OF THE MENNONITE MOVEMENT

I.

THE FORMATION OF THE OLD EVANGELICAL BROTHERHOOD KNOWN AS ANABAPTISTS OR MENNONITES

§1 1. We present here the most essential material concerning the *origin of the church of our fathers* according to a rare, small publication, written for and commissioned by the Prussian Mennonites, which was edited by two non-Mennonites and bore the title: *Beitraege zur Kenntnis der Mennoniten-Gemeinden in Europa und Amerika* (Contributions for the Understanding of the Mennonite Churches in Europe and America). It was edited and published by Baron von Reiswitz and Professor Wadzeck in Berlin in 1821. Ours is a free and abridged rendering with occasional supplementary material taken from other sources. Whenever we quote directly, this is indicated by the use of quotation marks: ". . . ."

a) "A significant number of evangelical family heads [Reiswitz and Wadzeck begin p. 1][1] were called Re-Baptizers, Baptists or Anabaptists in Germany. Since these names have come to carry spiteful connotations, however, it would appear to be more proper . . . to identify them as Mennonites (or Anabaptists), naming them after one of their respectable teachers, the gentle Menno Simons, because they differ from other Christians primarily in the doctrine concerning infant baptism."

b) According to Reiswitz and Wadzeck, the origin of this Christian group is shrouded in obscurity. Their own members assert, and in this they are supported by the researches of the most prominent church historians, that these origins are hidden in the earliest beginnings of the good Waldensians, who sought refuge in Europe's most remote valleys (Savoy, Lombardy, etc.) in order to escape a frightful persecution. Yet they did not abandon the truth once they had recognized it. Who has not heard of the quiet, simple, devout sons of Peter Waldo,[2] the forerunner of Wycliffe, John Hus and Luther? When Luther and the others initiated the Reformation, the descendants of these Waldensians also took courage and openly witnessed to the truth.

c) Reiswitz and Wadzeck insist that the Mennonites remained aloof from the horrors of the Peasants' War, Thomas Muentzer's hordes and the Muenster Anabaptists [1525-1535], [their entire subsequent history proves this]. Menno Simons, one of their most important teachers explained that he and his friends had never consented to such folly and horror: "No one can honestly accuse me of ever having given assent to the teachings of the Muensterites. Rather, I have continuously striven against them secretly and openly through the spoken as well as the written word for more than seventeen years. We do not recognize those as our brothers and sisters who reject the cross of Christ, despise the Lord's Word and embrace worldly vices under the pretense of a moral conduct, as the Muensterites did."

d) Leading church historians have asserted that it was undoubtedly primarily because the Muensterites also rejected infant baptism that the friends of Menno were mistakenly identified with them. Concerning this Menno writes most appropriately: "If our accusers wish to assert that just because we have been baptized with the same baptism [as adults] as the Muensterites, that we are therefore also to be included with them in one body and community, then we answer: If the outward baptism does indeed have such significance, then they [our opponents] need to ask themselves what kind of community they have, for it is well known that even adulterers, murderers and others have received the same baptism as they have."

e) Reiswitz and Wadzeck rightly surmise that it is possible that many descendants of the peace-loving Waldensians, during the general religious unrest of those times, regarded the Muensterites[3] and related fanatics as brothers, but later turned from them in disgust.

f) Widespread and furious persecutions led by the established churches arose against the peaceful Anabaptist followers of Menno Simons in every country; and because the persecuted did not bear arms, they were readily robbed, hunted down and murdered by their enemies. They were the lambs which endure and suffer patiently. (Cf. below III: "Persecutions.")

§2 2. In a strictly confessional Lutheran publication by Dr. Karl Meusel entitled *Kirchliches Handlexikon,* Vol. 4, p. 549, we read: ". . . *It is not correct to say that the Mennonites descended from the Muensterites,* if for no other reason than that their beginnings reach farther back than the Muensterites, even though both movements can partially be traced back to a common origin. The Anabaptist congregation at Bockholt in 1536 [the year of Menno's baptism] revealed differences between the Obbenites, as they were called at that time [after Obbe Phillips who ordained Menno], and the Muensterites as well as the

Melchiorites. They agreed only in their common rejection of infant baptism. A diametrical antithesis between the Muensterites and Obbenites emerged above all in their doctrine of the kingdom of God: whereas the former endorsed the use of the sword to establish such a kingdom, the latter decisively rejected all human means toward this end and declared that the kingdom of God would always be persecuted on earth, while the Melchiorites adopted a mediating position, believing that the kingdom of God would be established through a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit." ["Melchiorites"—named after Melchior Hoffmann, a talented but doctrinely not very sound leader of the Anabaptists.]

II.
MENNO SIMONS

1. "Menno Simons' Withdrawal from the Catholic Church." §3

This autobiography of Menno, written in the eighteenth year of his ministry in the Anabaptist movement, is found in the *Beitraege zur Kenntnis der Mennonitengemeinden* and in Menno's three "foundation books" found in Deknatel's edition of *Menno Simons Vollstaendige Werke* (Menno Simons' Complete Works), published by the Mennonite publishing House in Elkhart, Indiana, 1875, and in *Geschichte etc. und Glaubenslehre der Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten* (History and Doctrines of the Anabaptists or Mennonites) by Pastor C. H. A. van der Smissen. These and other publications agree perfectly in all essential matters. Only occasional variations in style are to be found; but since the books are translations from the Dutch and the style not original, we have not confined ourselves to any one style.

a) "Dear reader, I write the truth in Christ and do not lie. At the age of twenty-four[4]I entered the priesthood in my father's village of Pingjum [Friesland, Northern Holland]. Two others my age served there as well: one was my pastor [provost], a well-educated man, the other was my subordinate. These two had read the Scriptures to some extent; I, however, had not so much as touched it, fearing that I would be led astray if I read it! Imagine how ignorant a preacher I was for two years.

b) "One year later, as often as I handled the bread and wine in the performance of the mass [the Roman Catholic communion service], the thought occurred to me that these did not really constitute the Lord's flesh and blood. At first I thought this idea came from the devil who might be trying to lead me away from the faith. I confessed it often and prayed; nevertheless I was not able to rid myself of these thoughts.

c) "The two above-mentioned young men and I spent our days in gambling, drinking, and similar vain amusements, as is unfortunately the custom among such idle people. If we then began to discuss the

Scriptures, I could not say a word to them without being derisive, for I myself did not know what I wanted, so closed was the Word of God to me.

d) "Finally I decided in all diligence to examine the New Testament. I had not read far when it became clear to me that we had all been deceived; it was thus that my doubts concerning the communion bread were resolved and my fear of guilt was removed without any human instruction. Luther, however, did help me to the extent that he taught that no one can be condemned to eternal death through human commandments.

e) "By God's grace I grew in knowledge of the Scriptures from day to day so that some people soon called me an evangelical preacher, though undeservedly so. Everyone sought and praised me for the world loved me and I loved the world. In spite of this it was said that I preached God's Word and was a fine man.

f) "Then, before I had ever heard of any of the brethren, it happened that a God-fearing, pious man named Sicke Snyder [5] was beheaded at Leeuwarden because he had been rebaptized. It seemed strange to me that one should speak of a different baptism. Eagerly I searched the Scriptures and gave serious thought to the issue; but of infant baptism I could find no justification in the Bible. When I realized this, I discussed the matter with my pastor, and after many talks with him I brought him to the point where he admitted that infant baptism had no foundation in the Scriptures.

g) "Nevertheless I did not dare to trust my own understanding. I therefore sought counsel from several other authors. They taught that children had to be washed from their original sin by baptism. I compared this doctrine with the Scriptures and found it to be contrary to the blood of Christ. Thereupon I consulted Luther, eager to learn the reason from him. He taught me that children must be baptized on the basis of their own faith. I recognized that even this was not in accordance with God's Word. Next I consulted Bucer who taught me that one must baptize children in order the more diligently to care for them and bring them up in the ways of the Lord. However, I found this too to be unfounded. Fourthly I turned to Bullinger who referred me to the [Old] Covenant and circumcision. But this I also found to be inconsistent with the Scriptures.

h) "When I observed that the authors disagreed so greatly with one another, each following his own reasoning, it became obvious to me that we had been led astray with regard to infant baptism.

i) "Soon thereafter I was called to Witmarsum [also in Friesland], the village of my birth. I moved there for the sake of fame and personal profit, but continued to preach God's Word without spirit or love, as is the way of hypocrites. The disciples I produced were no better than I

their teacher: vain boasters and frivolous babblers who, like myself, really had no interest in these matters. And while I had already gained much knowledge from the Scriptures, I nevertheless wasted that knowledge through the lusts of my youth in an impure, sensual, unprofitable life without any fruit, and sought nothing but gain, ease, the favor of men, splendor, reputation and honor as those generally do who are afflicted by this illness.

k) "Note, dear reader; thus it was by God's boundless grace and through the illumination of the Holy Spirit while reading, rereading and meditating upon the Scriptures that I acquired my understanding of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and not through the influence of seductive sects as some have accused me. Yet if any man has in any way been helpful to me, I want to thank God eternally for this.

l) "Meanwhile, after having lived one year at Witmarsum, it happened that several persons appeared who raised the issue of baptism. To this very hour I do not know from where these first enquirers came, where they made their home, or who they in fact really were, nor have I ever seen them.

m) "Shortly thereafter the Muensterite sect[6] appeared [1533-35] which deceived many of our pious people. I was deeply troubled for I perceived that though they were zealous they erred in doctrine. As far as I was able I exerted my feeble efforts in opposing them by preaching and exhortation. Twice I conferred with one of their leaders, once in private and once in public. But my admonitions availed nothing because of my improper conduct, for I was doing things I knew to be wrong. This report spread far and wide and it was said that I could readily silence these persons. Wherever and whoever they were, people looked to me for answers.

n) "Thus it became apparent to me that I had become the defender of all the impenitent who appealed to me as an authority. This caused me no little anxiety, and I sighed to God in prayer: Lord, help me lest I make myself responsible for other men's sins! My soul was troubled and I began to reflect upon the end results of my actions, namely, even though I should gain the whole world (Matt. 16:26), live a thousand years and yet finally have to endure the wrath of God, what would I have gained?

o) "It was only after many gruesome edicts,[7] strangulations and murders that this poor straying flock, which wandered as sheep without a true shepherd, gathered itself together and moved to a place called Oude Kloster (Old Cloister). Unfortunately, in accordance with the ungodly Muensterite teaching and contrary to the spirit, Word and example of Christ, they resorted to the use of the sword, which the Lord had commanded Peter to return to its sheath, for their protection.

p) "When this had happened, the blood of these—though mis-

guided—people weighed so heavily upon my heart that I could neither bear it nor find any peace of mind.[8] I reflected upon my sinful ways, my hypocritical teachings and idolatry, in which I still persisted for the sake of appearances, though without joy and against my better judgment. With my own eyes I had seen these zealous children willingly sacrifice property and life for their convictions and beliefs, although they were in error. And I had been one of those who had helped to reveal the papal abominations to some of them![9] Nevertheless I had retained my unrestrained life style and recognized abominations, and that for no other reason than that I wished to satisfy my carnal comforts and remain immune from the cross of Christ.

q) "These matters gnawed at my heart to such an extent that I could bear it no longer. I thought to myself: miserable man that I am, what am I doing! If I continue in this way and do not live in agreement with the word of the Lord, according to the knowledge of the truth which I have obtained; if I do not rebuke to the best of my limited ability the hyprocrisy, the impenitent, carnal life, the perverted baptism, Lord's Supper and false worship of God, which the learned teach; if I, through bodily fear, do not show them the real foundation of the truth, neither use all my powers to direct the wandering flock, who would gladly do their duty if they only knew it, to the true pastures of Christ—oh, how shall their shed blood, though shed in error, rise up against me at the judgment seat of the Almighty and pronounce sentence against my poor, miserable soul! My heart trembled in my body. I prayed to God amidst sighs and tears that He would give to me, a troubled sinner, the gift of His grace and create a clean heart within me; that through the merits of the blood of Christ, He would graciously forgive my unclean walk and unprofitable life, and bestow wisdom, spirit, freedom and courage upon me so that I might preach His exalted and praiseworthy name and holy word unperverted and make manifest His truth to His glory.

r) "Now I began, in the name of the Lord, openly to teach true repentance from the pulpit,[10] to direct the people onto the narrow path, and to reprove all sin and ungodliness, all idolatry and false worship; and, to the extent that I had then received grace from God, I openly presented baptism and the Lord's Supper according to the spirit and doctrine of Christ. I also earnestly and faithfully warned everyone against the abominations of Muenster with regard to kings, polygamy, the kingdom of God and the use of the sword, etc., until the Lord, after a period of nine months, granted me His fatherly Spirit, His assistance and mighty hand, so that suddenly and voluntarily I was able to relinquish honor and reputation, which I had gained among the people, as well as give up my antichristian abominations, unrestrained and secure life.

s) "In 1536,[11] impoverished and distressed, I voluntarily yielded to

the powerful cross of Christ my Lord, and in weakness feared God. I sought God-fearing people, and though they were few in number, I found some[12] who were zealous and maintained the truth. I debated with the erring ones and, through the Word of God, by God's grace and power won some and led them to Christ, while the hardened and rebellious I commended to the Lord.

t) "Behold, my reader, thus the Lord of mercy, through the benign influence of the abundant grace which He extended to me, a miserable sinner, touched my heart, produced in me a new mind, humbled me in His fear, granted me a measure of self-knowledge, turned me from the way of death and graciously called me to the narrow way of life and communion with His saints. To Him be praise in eternity, Amen.

u) "About one year later, while reading, writing and studying the Word of God in seclusion, it happened that seven or eight persons[13] came to me who were united in mind and soul; in their faith and life, as far as one could judge, they appeared blameless; in accordance with the testimony of the Scriptures they had separated themselves from the world, placed themselves under the cross and sincerely abhorred not only the Muensterite sect but also the damnable horrors and sects of the world. These came and begged me, in the name of those God-fearing souls who were of one mind and spirit with us, that I should take to heart the great sufferings and pressing needs of these distressed people,—for the hunger was great but faithful stewards few—and apply the talents which I had undeservedly received from the Lord. Matt. 25 and Luke 19.

v) "When I heard this, my heart was greatly troubled. Anxiety and fear surrounded me. On the one hand I saw my limited talents, my great ignorance,[14] my weak nature, the timidity of my flesh, the unbounded wickedness, the perversity and tyranny of the world, the great and powerful sects, the craftiness of many people, and the heavy cross that would oppress me should I comply with their requests. On the other hand, I saw the pitiable hunger, the lack and needs of these God-fearing, pious children, for I saw plainly that they were like simple, deserted sheep without a shepherd. Matt. 9; Mark 6.

w) "Finally, after many entreaties, I placed myself at the disposal of the Lord and His church with the condition that they [these six to eight delegates and their followers] might pray earnestly to the Lord with me for a season; should it be His acceptable will that I could and should serve Him to His glory, He might, in His fatherly goodness, grant me a heart and mind that would enable me to join in Paul's testimony: 'Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel' (I Cor. 9). If not, He should so ordain matters that it might be hindered. For Christ says: 'If two of you agree on earth about any request you have to make, that request will be granted by my heavenly Father. For where two or three

have met together in my name, I am there among them.' Matt. 18.

x) "Note, therefore, dear reader, that I was not called in an unworthy manner to this service by those of Muenster or any other seditious sect, as some have slandered me, but by a people who were prepared to follow Christ and His Word, who led a penitent life in the fear of God, served their neighbors in love, bore the cross, sought the welfare and salvation of all men, loved righteousness and truth, and abhorred wickedness and unrighteousness. Certainly these are living and powerful proofs that these people did not belong to a perverted sect, as many accused them, but were true Christians, though unknown to the world,[15] if otherwise one believes that Christ's Word is true and His unblamable, holy life and example infallible. Thus have I, a miserable sinner, been enlightened by the Lord, converted to a new mind, fled from Babel and entered into Jerusalem, and finally been called to this high and arduous service.

y) "When the above-mentioned persons persisted in their supplications and my own conscience, though quite weak, burdened me because I saw the great hunger and need referred to above, I surrendered myself body and soul to the Lord, commended myself to His gracious care and, in due time [1537], began to teach [16] in accordance with His holy Word, to baptize, to labor in the vineyard of the Lord with my limited talents, to build up His temple and holy city, and to repair the dilapidated walls. The great and mighty God has made known and revealed the true word of repentance, the word of His grace and power together with the salutary use of His holy sacraments through our humble service, doctrine and unlearned writings as well as through the faithful service, labor and co-operation of our faithful fellow brothers in many cities and countries.[17] He has made the form of His church so glorious and endowed it with such insuperable power that many haughty and proud hearts have been humbled; the impure have been purified; the drunkards made sober; the stingy, charitable;[18] the cruel, loving; the godless, God-fearing; but they have also faithfully sacrificed property and blood, body and life, as is still daily apparent, for the glorious witness which they bear. These, indeed, cannot be the fruits and evidence of a false doctrine with which God will have nothing to do; nor could it [this doctrine] have survived for so long under such a heavy cross and dire distress were it not through the words of the Most High and His power. What is more, they [the confessors of this doctrine] are endowed with such great grace and wisdom in their trials as Christ has promised to all His children (Luke 21:16), that all the worldly-wise and famous teachers [learned theologians], together with all the blood-guilty tyrants (who, O God, boast that they are Christians), have been vanquished and put to shame by these invincible heroes and pious witnesses of Christ. As a result, these tyrants, unable to find any other weapons, take recourse to banishment, arrest, torture, burning, and

murder, as was the practice and custom of the old serpent from the very beginning, and as may still, alas, be witnessed daily in many places in our Netherlands.

z) "Behold, this is our calling and doctrine, this the fruit of our labors for which we are so horribly slandered and hatefully persecuted. Whether or not all the prophets, apostles and faithful servants of God have generated similar fruits through their service, we gladly leave to the judgment of all the pious.

a) "But as far as my own poor, weak and imperfect life is concerned, I freely confess that I am a poor sinner, that I was conceived in sin (Psalm 51), was born of sinful seed, and with David say that my sin is ever before me. My thoughts, words and deeds convict me of this. With Paul, I confess that no good dwells in my flesh. Nevertheless, of this I may boast in my weakness: if the wicked world would listen to our doctrine—which is not ours, but Christ's—with patience and submissively follow the same in a true fear of God, then a better and more Christian world would without a doubt arise than is now, unfortunately, the case. I thank my God who gave me grace that I desire to deliver the whole world from its ungodly and evil nature and win it to Christ, even at the cost of my own blood.[19] I wish to fear my God with all my heart, to love and seek to serve Him, to do that which is right and good before Him and be an unblamable and pious Christian. This is all that I ask of His grace. I also hope, by the Lord's help, that no one in the whole world may with truth accuse me of a covetous and luxurious life. Money and riches I do not possess, nor do I desire them, although some, from a perverted heart, say that I eat more roast meat than they do seethed; that I drink more wine than they do beer. My Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, was also called a winebibber and a glutton by the perverse. I trust that through the grace of God I am innocent in this matter, and stand acquitted before God. He who purchased me with the blood of His love, and called me, who am unworthy, to His service, knows me, and He knows that I seek neither wealth nor possessions, neither luxury nor ease upon earth, but only the praise of my Lord, my salvation and that of many others. Because of this, I with my poor, weak wife [Gertrude] and small children endured excessive anxiety, oppression, affliction, misery, and persecution for eighteen years so that I have been forced to live a life of misery and fear. Indeed, while the preachers [of the ruling churches] repose on soft beds and cushions, we generally have to hide ourselves in secret nooks and crannies. While they openly make merry at weddings etc., with pipe, drum and lute, we have to be on our guard when a dog barks for fear the arresting officer has arrived. While everyone greets them as doctors and masters,[20] we have to tolerate being called Anabaptists, hedge-preachers, deceivers, and heretics, and be greeted in the name of the devil. In short, while they are gloriously

rewarded for their services with large incomes and good times, our recompense and portion from them is fire, sword, and death. Behold, my faithful reader, in such fear and poverty, misery and fear of death have I, wretched man, unchangingly performed the service of the Lord to this hour. And I hope through His grace to perform it to His glory as long as I linger in this tabernacle.

b) "What I and my faithful colleagues have sought or could have sought in performing these our heavy and dangerous duties is apparent to all well-disposed people, who may readily judge from the works and their rewards. Herewith I humbly entreat the reader for Jesus' sake to accept this my forced confession concerning my illumination, conversion, and calling and to receive it in a good spirit. I have made it out of great necessity so that the pious reader may know how it happened, seeing that I am slandered by the preachers and am accused without foundation of truth of being called and ordained to this service by a seditious and heretical sect. He that fears God let him read and judge."

§4 2. *Johannes Deknatel: Report Concerning Menno and the Origin of the Anabaptist Movement.*

Johannes Deknatel, teacher (elder and pastor) of the Amsterdam Anabaptists, who died in 1759, edited a collection of the most remarkable of Menno Simons' works, which were translated from the Dutch into German in 1765 and printed in Koenigsberg, East Prussia, under the title *Fundamente der Christlichen Lehre* (Foundations of Christian Doctrine), etc., in three volumes. In the introduction Deknatel presents the following information and opinions concerning Menno Simons and the origins of the Anabaptists, later called Mennonites. This is also contained in Reiswitz and Wadzeck, *Beitraege*. Deknatel was a pious man, deeply committed to his religious fellowship and its teachings, and an important academic theologian as well as tolerant and brotherly toward other believers. It is a pleasure to be able to substantiate that he was an intimate friend and brother of Count von Zinzendorf, and that he and many other Mennonites participated in the founding of the Moravian Brethren (intended originally to be merely an association, not a separate church). Zinzendorf had communion with Deknatel and his household in the latter's home. In like manner, he was closely associated with John Wesley (according to Kieferndorf as reported in Leendertz).

Deknatel wrote both in Dutch and in German. However, we are not tied to the style of either edition and paraphrase freely.

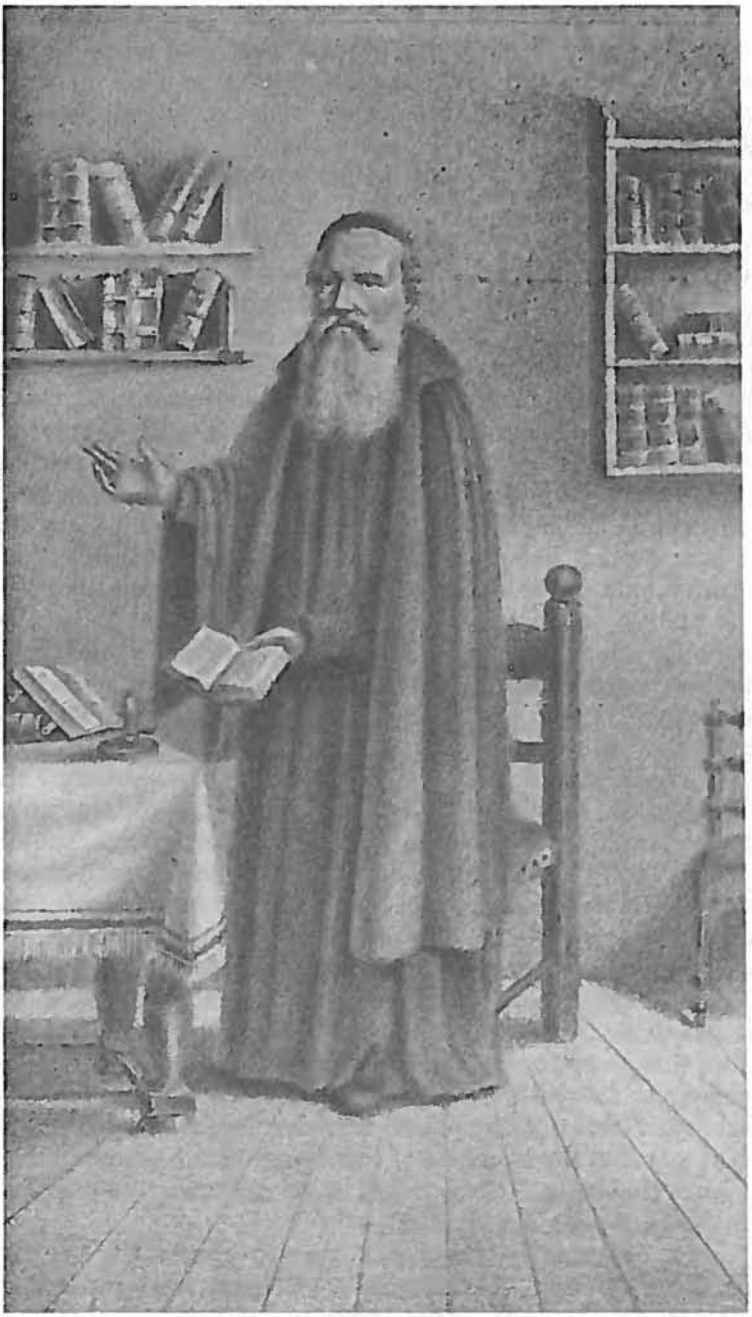
a) Deknatel writes that, "just as there were many reform movements like the Waldensians, the Wycliffites and the Hussites, which God used to prepare the way for the great Reformation, Anabaptists existed before Menno. [Compare below: "Bohemian-Moravian Brethren"

or peaceful Hussites]. Some of the Waldensians too, as Menno reports, who existed as 'churches under the cross,' practiced adult baptism and refrained from swearing oaths or participating in wars and so forth. Because of the intense persecutions they were exposed to, however, they had become dispersed sheep; it was probably they who called Menno, according to his own testimony in his withdrawal from the Catholic church, to be their bishop."

b) Thus I assume, writes Deknatel, after having carefully weighed all the evidence, that Menno, after having begun his reformation activity, was on the one hand used to gather the scattered children of God, and on the other was destined to be an instrument in the hand of God since the time for a general reformation had arrived. Despite the persecutions and dangers, he worked with great zeal in these countries until the Roman Catholic hierarchy, which opposed him with the ferocity of wolves, joined forces with the secular government [21] and issued a bloody edict against him in 1543 which outlawed him and declared him to be fair game for any man, placed a price on his head, and forbade anyone on pain of death to shelter him; indeed, it declared that criminals and even murderers who would turn him in to the hangman, should receive the emperor's pardon.

c) Although all of this did not discourage him, for he continued in this work for some time under the constant threat of death, he was nevertheless forced, finally, to leave the region. [The Netherlands, whose northern region today constitutes the Kingdom of Holland or the "Netherlands," while the southern region constitutes the Kingdom of Belgium]. He escaped first to Wismar in Mecklenburg, then to Fresenburg in the vicinity of Oldesloe in Schleswig-Holstein, where God provided a safe abode. Fresenburg was the estate of a noble, subject only to the emperor, and the current Lord, Count Alefeld, who had served in the army of the Netherlands, had seen many innocent people, our very ancestors, persecuted by fire and the sword, and put to death. Through God's leading he was moved with compassion, and in his kindness generously provided them with a secure home and freedom of worship. This attracted many Anabaptists from the Netherlands and other places. Here, too, Menno and many others lived together in a large community. [Particularly in the village of Wuestenfelde. According to Reiswitz and Wadzeck, the Hamburg Mennonite minister Geerd Roosen, who died in 1711, reported that the members of this congregation gradually moved to Altona and Hamburg. Today (1904) their ministers are Pastor B. C. Roosen, [22] and H. van der Smissen].

d) Most importantly, the Count granted Menno the free use of a printing press through which Menno's teachings were made known to the whole world. Through these writings unbiased Christian governments were able to see the perversity of the accusations made against him so that the intense persecutions gradually came to an end. Thus the



Menno Simons (preaching).



The Menno Monument.

power of the truth, as Menno taught it, opened the eyes of many, and by the Lord's grace resulted in great reforms in many localities. Without weapons or self defence, without the help of kings or princes, but only and alone through the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, Menno broke through all the barriers until finally, after having overcome all obstacles, he entered his rest in peace and quietness at Fresenburg on January 13, 1559,* at the age of 66. [Two simple monuments commemorate him: one in his birthplace, Witmarsum, and the so-called "Mennostone" where he died.] In August, 1906, the Hamburg-Altona congregation, with the grateful approbation of the *Vereinigung der Mennonitengemeinden* in the German Empire, decorated the "Mennostone" with a bronze engraving of Menno's likeness (done by Prof. P. Dueyffke). The earlier Wuestenfelde now belongs to the entailed property of Blumendorf-Fresenburg. The *Vereinigung der Mennonitengemeinden* in the German Empire has a 99 year lease on an appropriate plot for the memorial from the owner of the enfeoffed (inalienable and indivisible family inheritance) property, Baron von Jenisch. The area around the marker is beautifully landscaped. "It is located in an open field which, to this day, is still referred to in the vernacular as the *Mennostueck*, and the place where the meadow dips slightly was formerly called the *Mennoberg*. In 1654 Anabaptists settled over the entire district which is still known as Wuestenfelde. According to the report of Geert Roosen, there were "many skilled as well as unskilled artisans among them, such as had never been seen in Holstein before. The Thirty Years' War brought an end to this thriving community. A linden tree near the Fresenburg mill is called the *Mennolinde.*" (Taken from the *Mennonitische Blaetter*, no. 8, 1906). We owe this work of loving piety to the Hamburg-Altona Mennonite congregation, above all to its pastor, Brother H. van der Smissen, and his untiring efforts on behalf of Mennonite history, the revival and unification of Mennonitism.

e) Thus the work of the Reformation, writes Deknatel, begun in the Netherlands through Menno's writings, was dramatically strengthened through the collaboration of Dirk Philips[23] and Menno's other co-workers. Not only did Menno establish his congregations in Friesland, Groningen, East Friesland, Holland, Brabant and on the shores of the Baltic [up to Riga], but also in many parts of [upper and lower] Germany.[24] Thus we find many old Anabaptist congregations, descended from the ancient Waldensians, which grew noticeably with the coming of the Reformation through the work of men like Felix Manz, Michael Sattler, Leonhard Kaiser and others—many of whom [numbering in the thousands] suffered a martyr's death between 1525 and 1530—in the Palatinate, Alsace, Bavaria, Swabia [Wuerttemberg und Baden], Switzerland, Austria and Moravia.[25] According to the *Martyrs Mirror* of Thieleman van Braght, one finds different traces of Waldensian influence

* Ed. note: Historians generally agree that he died in 1561.

in the above-mentioned regions as well as that these congregations fellowshipped with one another and were "churches under the cross."

f) Through Menno's reformation, these congregations gradually acquired the name of "Mennonite"—just as we are called Mennonites by our government—instead of the hated term "Anabaptist." [26] Many of the congregations in the Palatinate, Switzerland and Alsace are still in existence today [during Deknatel's lifetime]; even in Northern Hungary congregations of those who fled there from Moravia still exist. [27] Occasionally we [of Deknatel's time] receive letters from the former as well as the latter. Without a doubt, the latter are of Waldensian [28] origin.

g) From all of this it is apparent that Menno was a faithful instrument of the Reformation and the most formidable founder [actually only reorganizer!] of our church, comparable to Luther and Calvin in their churches. For Menno was not only exceptionally talented, blessed, zealous and suited to this task; in addition he was *not an uneducated man.* He knew Latin and Greek: the former can be seen from the introduction, marginal notes and conclusion to his essay on Christian baptism; the latter from his comments upon and evaluation of Greek words scattered throughout his writings. [Thus far Deknatel. Ramseyer says that Menno had, through intensive studies, prepared himself very well for the priesthood. Even his enemies conceded that his writings proved him to be exceptionally learned for his time. Mosheim, previously referred to, stated that he had been so well educated that many had looked on him as on an oracle. The English Baptist professor, Dr. Cramp, says in his *History of the Baptists:* "Menno was a scholar of the first rank."]

3. a) *Menno's Doctrine* §5

Menno's doctrine is fully presented in the three books referred to above: "Foundation of Christian Doctrine." (Cf. below IV, 2). To our knowledge, the Mennonite Publishing Company's edition, Elkhart, Indiana, of *Mennos Saemtliche Werke* is the best known.

b) Menno's doctrines on church discipline, baptism and communion are, for our purposes, satisfactorily treated in his "Withdrawal from the Catholic Church" [29] The following quotations from his *Bekenntnis von dem Dreieinigen ewigen und wahren Gott Vater Sohn und Heiligen Geist* (Confession of the Triune, Eternal and True God: Father, Son and Holy Ghost) and other writings characterize his position on the important doctrinal issues concerning God and Christ. "We believe and confess, in accordance with the Scriptures, that this one, eternal, omnipotent, inscrutable, invisible, inexpressible and indescribable God is the eternal incomprehensible Father with His incomprehensible Son and Holy Ghost. We confess that the Father is true God, the Son is true God, and the Holy Ghost is true

God—not according to human or comprehensible means, but according to spiritual and incomprehensible means." "I teach everyone simply and correctly that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, the Son of God and of man, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, a poor, miserable [capable of suffering] man, like unto us in all things except without sin." "We believe and confess that the Holy Spirit is a true, substantial or personal[30] Spirit, as the Church Fathers call him, and this in a divine manner, just as the Father is a true father and the Son a true son."

c) Menno's teaching concerning the redemptive faith is to be found in the following of his essays: "Concerning Faith" and "Believe the Gospel!" This Gospel is the good news and declaration of God's good will and grace toward us in the forgiveness of our sins through Christ Jesus. Faith, through the Holy Spirit, accepts this and no longer relies upon its former righteousness or unrighteousness, but now hopes for things beyond hope, Rom. 4:8, indeed, throws itself unreservedly on the Lord's grace, Word and promise, knowing full well that God is faithful and cannot but keep His promise. Ps. 33:4, Rom. 3:9, I Cor. 1:9. Thus is the heart renewed, turned around [converted], justified, made pious and joyous. Rom. 14:17, Gal. 5:22. A child of God is born, John 1:13, approaches the throne of grace full of confidence, Hebrews 4:11, and becomes a co-heir with Christ, inheriting eternal life. Rom. 8:14, I Tim. 1:2. Those who believe this are they of whom the Scriptures speak: He has given them power to become children of God, even to them that believe in His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1. They are those who have been justified by faith, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Rom. 5. All of this out of grace and love: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Rom. 3:23-25. No one on earth can boast that he has acquired his own faith and salvation; it is the gift of God. Eph. 2:8. *All who have received faith from God, have received a tree laden with a variety of good and precious fruits. . . .* The true and genuine faith acceptable in God's sight cannot remain idle, it must bring forth fruit and manifest its character. It is constantly active in love; voluntarily enters righteousness; subdues flesh and blood while crucifying the lusts and desires; finds joy in the cross of Christ; renews and gives birth to newness of life, gives life, is candid and peaceable in Christ. Behold, such a faith is a gift of God, Eph. 2:8, by which, according to the Scriptures, the righteous shall live,

as Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Rachel and all pious saints have done. Every good tree brings forth good fruit according to its kind. Matt. 7:17. And every tree which does not bear good fruit, though it have many leaves, must be condemned and consumed by fire. . . ."

d) It is apparent that Menno was equally distant from the Roman Catholic position of works righteousness as he was from the frivolous Protestant position of salvation by faith alone without a sanctified life.

e) On the question of the relationship of church and state, Menno was a resolute opponent of the state church or state Christianity. Christ is the only kind and chief shepherd of the church. The state rightly has jurisdiction over the entire civic, social and ethical sphere of life; it is in this regard that the Christian owes absolute obedience to the state in so far as its laws do not go against God's Word. The only discipline to be practiced by the church is admonition and separation (to put under the ban). Only those who live by the faith described above may be a part of the church and enjoy its blessings of salvation and grace. Only these may be baptized and take part in Holy Communion. "As long as a person errs in faith and doctrine and retains a carnal mind, he may under no circumstances be admitted to the body of the God-fearing and penitent." *Foundation*, vol. 1, p. 121 of the old Deknatel edition.

f) He rejected the swearing of oaths. From the general tenor of his writings, some have drawn the conclusion that he deemed it unlawful for a Christian to serve in the military or government, while others deny this. We do not wish, at this point, to make a premature judgment, but only quote a few of the most characteristic passages from his "Exhorting Supplication to Magistrates": "Christ wishes to remain the sole head of His church, the only teacher in His school, the only king to judge His kingdom, and that not by man-made laws or teachings nor by strangling and murder, but by His Holy Spirit, power, grace and Word. Therefore we, who recognize you as our gracious lords in all matters temporal, beg you, who by God's mercy are the foundations of the earth, to allow the eternal and almighty king Jesus Christ to be the only Saviour, Lord and Authority of our poor souls, as God the Father has ordained it. And that you might fulfill the duties and obligations of the temporal office to which you are called; for we desire with all our hearts to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. Matt. 22:21. We petition you, give serious consideration to our teaching. . . ." In the treatise "Confession of the Distressed Christians," we read: "Dear Lords, seek God, fear Him and serve Him with all your strength; do justice to widows, orphans, strangers, the distressed and all the sorrowing; cleanse your hands of blood, rule your lands with wisdom and in peace [he does not say: leave your post, turn all your thoughts, words and deeds to the crucified Christ and follow in His footsteps, therefore he must deem it possible for magistrates to become disciples of Christ, otherwise why

should he admonish them!] For, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, etc. Is. 1:18, Ezek. 33:11, 18:32. May the great and merciful Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, I Tim. 6:15, grant your Lordships wisdom to recognize the veritable truth, to follow it faithfully, and to rule the people, cities, and lands entrusted to you in peace and the blessing of God [for which they had to remain in their calling of government], to the honor of God and the salvation of many souls. . . ."

g) The regulations concerning the ban, to which he allowed himself to be driven in his old age by Dirk Philips and Leonhard Bouvens, among others—the advocates of the strict use of the ban—when he was himself threatened by it, were far too severe (cf. below: "Divisions"); even marriage was not sacrosanct if a member remained impenitent. In this regard it must be admitted that the Anabaptists of that time misunderstood certain normally civil matters and mixed them with spiritual-ecclesiastical matters in an unscriptural manner, something that Mennonite authors have conceded, indeed criticized.

h) In 1615, an Anabaptist synod declared Menno's controversy with the Reformed theologians concerning the manner of Christ's incarnation to be an unimportant issue, and Menno's point of view a personal opinion which, in the "Dortrecht Confession" of 1632, was mildly criticized and then dropped (Article 4, c). Nothing is known of this issue among us in Russia. According to this polemical treatise, our Lord had not received His body from, but in Mary.

i) On the whole, Menno's polemical writings do not belong to those that one reads with spiritual pleasure, indeed one cannot read them without a painful feeling of spiritual uneasiness. He was no less intolerant than Luther, Calvin and their followers. The aspect that distinguished Menno and his colleagues from the rest was their application of the correct and strict evangelical principle never to counter, even their most erring opponents, with anything but the Word of God and prayer, an attitude which showed them to be centuries ahead of their time in their Christian understanding. The real Menno appears in his noblest and most sympathetic form in his "Withdrawal from the Catholic Church," a treatise in which one senses that he presents his ideals undeterred by enemies or friends, although even here not without considerable sharpness, as was customary in his day.

III.

PERSECUTIONS OF THE OLD EVANGELICAL-ANABAPTISTS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE TIME OF MENNO SIMONS

"Observe their end and follow after their faith!" §6

1. Concerning the persecution of the Anabaptists we will paraphrase passages from the Mennonite *Martyrs Mirror* of Tielemann van Braght, taken from Dr. th. Cramp: *History of the Baptists* and other sources.

a) "Michael Sattler was a monk. He was converted to the living God and became a preacher. He suffered the death of a martyr in Rottenburg[31] on May 26, 1527. The judgment against him read as follows: 'Michael Sattler shall be turned over to the executioner; he shall bring him to the place of judgment and there cut out his tongue; thereupon he shall be thrown onto a cart and his flesh torn twice with a pair of red hot tongs; then he shall bring him to the gates of the city and there torture him again in like manner.' This horrible judgment was carried out and the mutilated body later burned to ashes. Sattler's wife and various other women who had been captured with him were drowned. A number of the brethren, who were together with him in prison, were beheaded. Rottenburg became famous for such incidents.

b) "Hans Breal was captured in the Tyrol in 1557. After he had been repeatedly tortured in the futile hope that he could be forced to betray his brethren, he was finally thrown into a deep, dark and damp tower where he could see neither sun nor moon, nor even the slightest daylight, so that he never knew whether it was day or night. On occasion he could tell that it was night because it was cooler than before. The jail was dirty, damp and gloomy so that his clothes rotted on his very body and he was forced, for a time, to sit there naked. He had nothing but a coarse blanket which had been given to him; this he threw around his body and sat there in misery in the darkness. His shirt had moulded to such an extent that, with the exception of the collar which he hung on the wall, it could not even be used for a rag. As the sons of Pilate led him out in order to see if he wished to recant, the light of day caused him such agony that he was happy when they once again allowed him to go down to his dark tower. . . . Thus he lay in this gloomy tower for a long time, surrounded by mould and vermin; he protected his head with an old hat which had been thrown down to him out of pity. For many years no one had been imprisoned in this tower so that the vermin had multiplied in great numbers; only with time was he able to conquer his disgust and abhorrence of it. The worms often gnawed at his feet. . . . All summer long he lay in this gloomy tower, until shortly before Michaelmas in the late autumn. When it became apparent that the cold had begun to

penetrate the tower, he was brought out and put into another prison which could impossibly be worse. There he had to remain, with one hand and one foot placed in the stock for 37 weeks, so that it was impossible for him either to sit or lie down, forcing him to stand all the while. He also had to suffer a great deal of mockery and scorn at the hands of the godless. . . . Finally, the Council at Innsbruck issued a decree which the officials brought him to read. The content read as follows: 'Since he is so stubborn and will accept no admonition, he shall be sent to serve on the galley ships[32] the morning after this is presented to him; there he will discover how the obstinate are whipped and beaten.' But Hans replied that he intended to trust the Lord his God who could be found on sea as well as on land; He would stand by him and grant him patience. He was thereupon released from prison and allowed to recover during the next two days in the vicinity of the castle so that he might learn to walk again. But that was no easy matter, for he had become extremely weak through his imprisonment and confinement in the stocks, where he had been handcuffed and bound in chains; he had spent two years less five weeks in this condition and had not seen the sun for a year and a half. Hans was placed in the custody of an official with whom he traveled to the sea. On the second day of the journey they entered an inn where the official became drunk, and Hans utilized the favorable occasion to make good his escape. He recovered his health and strength, managed to return to the brethren, was called to the ministry of the Gospel and died in peace in the year 1583. Thus did the servants of God suffer in Germany.

c) "The persecution in Germany and Switzerland was so severe that there seemed to be no other way out of it than to emigrate. In the year 1530, under the leadership of Jakob Hutter, many thousands of Anabaptists emigrated from Switzerland, the Tyrol, the Austrian lands, Styria and Bavaria, and settled in Moravia. They purchased landed estates, built churches, and for a period of time enjoyed great prosperity in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. Many others, banished from their homelands, joined them so that their numbers increased steadily. But in the year 1535 Ferdinand of Bohemia commanded that they be expelled, and dispatched a military expedition against them to execute his command. Their property was confiscated, and all that they were able to accomplish was to be allowed to take their tools and implements with them. They retreated into the forests and lived there as best they could, conducted their church services and composed their souls to be patient. Hutter encouraged and consoled them. 'Be thankful to God,' he said, 'that you have been deemed worthy to suffer persecution and the hardships of banishment for His name's sake. Those are the wages of the elect in the clearing-house of the world, through which your heavenly father affirms that you are well-pleasing in His sight. Let every trace of

sorrow be far from you; let go of all care and sorrow, and consider how great will be the reward which awaits you for all of the sufferings that you now endure.'

d) "Jakob Hutter's letter to the governor of Moravia, which he wrote in the name of the brethren, is no doubt worthy of being kept in unfading remembrance. A short excerpt follows: '. . . We now find ourselves in the wilderness, in the forests and under the open skies; but we bear all this with patience and praise God that we have been deemed worthy to suffer for His name's sake. But for your sakes we deplore the fact that you treat the children of God so harshly and with so much ill-will. Those who fear God have been called to be patient; but woe, woe unto all those who persecute us without cause for the sake of God's truth and heap so many and such great sufferings upon us and expel us like so many dogs or animals; their destruction, judgment and damnation shall suddenly overtake them in terror and horror, in this world as in the next. For God will require from their hands the innocent blood which they have spilled, and will avenge His holy ones in a frightful and terrifying way, according to the word of the Prophets. Because you commanded us under threat of force immediately to go into exile, let this be our answer: We know of no place where we may live in peace and security, nor do we dare to live here any longer because of want and fear. If we return to the territory of this or that prince, everywhere enemies lie in wait for us. If we move forwards, we fall, like so many sheep encountering rapacious wolves and greedy lions, into the claws of tyrants and robbers. There are many widows among us and infants whose parents have been murdered and property confiscated by Ferdinand,[33] that terrible tyrant and enemy of God's righteousness. We do not dare desert these widows, orphans, and sick children which God has entrusted to our care and which He has commanded us to nourish, clothe, console, and provide for in every way, who cannot travel with us, and, if they are not cared for in some other way, will not live very long. We dare not transgress God's commandments in order to obey human commands, not even at the cost of money and property, life and limb. For their sake we cannot move away; but before we permit them to suffer injury in any way we will endure every hardship, indeed allow our very blood to be spilled for their sake. Beyond that we possess houses and lands, property which we have acquired by the sweat of our brow, which is our rightful property both in the sight of God and man; in order to sell it we need time and leisure. This property is indispensable for the support of our wives, widows, orphans and children, of which we have a large number, otherwise these would be condemned to die of hunger. At the present we are encamped in the distant forests and, if God wills, without damage. But, if you return our property to us, we will, as we have in the past, continue to live in peace and quiet. We do not wish to become a burden to anyone or give our

enemies, not even King Ferdinand, cause to complain. Our way of life, our customs as well as our walk are well known to everyone. We would sooner suffer the loss of one hundred florins than cheat anyone of a penny, sooner offer our life and die than strike our enemy with the hand, much less with the sword, spear or halberd, as the world does. We carry no weapons on our person, neither spear nor firearm, as is apparent to everyone; and those who say that we went into battle by the thousands lie and slander us shamelessly before our government. We bemoan such disgraceful slander before God and men and are distressed that the number of the righteous is so small. We wish that the whole world would be as we are, and that we could lead and convert all of mankind to the same faith; then all wars and unrighteousness would come to an end. We implore and entreat you most earnestly and submissively that you would take these our words well to heart. For we testify and speak what we know and have learned to be the truth in the sight of God. We speak from a pure heart which is filled with the love of God, and out of sincere Christian love, which we emulate before God and men. Live in peace.'

e) "The oppressor allowed himself to be moved once more. The order was rescinded and the Anabaptists were able to enjoy peace and freedom for a little while longer. But in the year 1547 their expulsion was carried out with indescribable severity and ferocity.[34] For centuries they wandered from place to place: to Hungary, hither and yon, in Walachia. Finally in 1770 the remnant moved to Russia, in the province of Tschernigov, where they settled on the lands of Count Rumianzev; it was there that Elder Cornelius Warkentin met them in 1794; then, in the 1840's, they settled in the Molotschna near Melitopol and founded Huttertal, Johannesruh, etc. After 1874 they emigrated to America. [Compare above "Deknatel" and below Appendix X.]

f) "In the year 1525[35] many Anabaptists fled to the Netherlands in the hope that they would be permitted there to worship God undisturbed. This might have happened if they had refrained from preaching the Gospel and had kept their opinions and teachings to themselves. But that was impossible. In the spirit of apostolic Christianity they 'travelled in all directions and preached the Word.' Many listened to them, were converted, baptized and joined the persecuted congregations in Amsterdam, Antwerp, Haarlem and elsewhere. At that time the hand of persecution rested heavily upon them. Emperor Charles V [to whose empire the Netherlands belonged] ordered that the 'heretics' be treated with inexorable severity, the Anabaptists being especially singled out in order to make a gruesome example of them."

g) "The first martyr, whose name has come down to us, to sacrifice his life in Holland was 'Wynken Claas' daughter by Monikendam, a widow,' who was strangled at the pyre in the Hague and then burned on

November 20, 1527. She came to the place of execution 'filled with joy as though she were on her way to a banquet.' Her last words were: 'I will not let go of God.'"

h) "In the same year Jan Welan and two others were executed in Haarlem. 'They were bound in chains on the pyre and slowly roasted, the fire having been started round about them first, until one could see the marrow flow out of the bones in their legs. Thus they were gradually burned and roasted, until death released them."

i) "Sicke Freerks Snyder[36] was beheaded at Leeuwarden in the year 1531. He had received Christian baptism upon his confession of faith as a seal of his regeneration as a child of God in accordance with the command of Christ and sought to live and walk in obedience to his Maker. This was the reason for his being held in chains at Leeuwarden in Friesland where he experienced great tribulation from the enemies of truth. And since no amount of torture, during which he demonstrated great steadfastness, could bring him to defect, he was executed by the sword in that same city, testifying to the true faith which he sealed with his death and blood. . . . His condemnation is recorded in the criminal court proceedings of the Frisian law court as follows: 'The law court today, March 20, 1531, condemns Sicke Freerks to death by the sword; his body shall be tied to the wheel and his head stuck on a stake because he has received rebaptism and perseveres in it.'"

k) "On June 10, 1535, a bloody ordinance was promulgated in Brussels. Death by fire was to be the punishment for all those who had been rebaptized, discovered, and who then would refuse to recant. If they recanted they would still have to die, though not by fire; the men were to be executed by the sword, 'the women drowned in a cesspool.' Those who so much as opposed the edict by failing to inform on and turn in the Anabaptists to the authorities were to suffer the same punishment as the guilty parties. Informants were rewarded with one-third of the confiscated possessions of the accused. And everyone was forbidden in any way to call on the authorities for mercy, forgiveness or reconciliation for the Anabaptists, or to turn in any petition or request on their behalf."

l) When Philip II succeeded his father Charles V on the throne in 1556, he renewed the edict of 1550 and added a few more provisions to it. The accounts from this period of time are truly heart-rending. It is a wonder that any Anabaptists managed to survive these trials. And yet it is a fact that they became stronger and grew consistently in number. Menno Simons, whose public career, as we know, began in the year 1537, preached, baptized, organized congregations, published books, and travelled ceaselessly from one place to another, often exposed to great danger; in spite of this, and even though a price had been placed on his

head, the designs of the enemy were frustrated and Menno died in peace. Many other preachers were also indefatigable in their zeal, among whom Dirk Philips and Leonhard Bouwens deserve honorable mention.

m) "Jan Claesen[37] had been responsible for printing and publishing the writings of Menno Simons. Because of this he was condemned 'to be executed by the sword, with his body tied to the wheel and his head stuck on a stake.'"

n) "Richardine Heynes suffered a martyr's death in 1547. She was treated with terrible severity and cruelly bound without compassion or mercy, even though a midwife was already at her side. In spite of this, they took her, without regard to the tears and lamentations of her little children, to the prison at Leeuwarden where, after three weeks of imprisonment, she gave birth to a boy. Later this beloved of Christ was tormented with severe sufferings and so horribly tortured that she was no longer able to lift her hands to her head. She was so inhumanly tortured primarily because she would give the authorities no information about the brethren. For the wolves could not be satiated and panted after more innocent blood. But the faithful God, who is a haven in time of need and a defence for all those who trust in Him, guarded her tongue so that no one was delivered up to suffering through her. When all attempts failed to turn her from Christ, she was condemned to die at the above-named place, stuffed in a sack like an animal and dumped into the water until she was drowned."

o) "In the year 1551 Hieronymus Segerson and another person were burned at Antwerp. The letters, which Segerson wrote from prison, breathe a spirit of serene piety and courageous patience. 'I would much sooner,' he said, 'have let myself be tortured ten times in one day and then finally roasted on a gridiron than to have renounced the faith which I have confessed.'"

p) "Lysken, Segerson's wife, was drowned. The account of her torture and death is quite remarkable. It states: 'Lysken, our sister, after languishing in bondage for a long time, has finally ended her pilgrimage, remaining steadfast in the Word of the Lord to the end. The Lord be praised for ever! She confessed her faith before the court, the officials, and the masses quite freely and frankly. At first she was questioned regarding baptism. She responded: 'I recognize only one true baptism and that is the baptism practiced by Christ and His disciples and which they handed on to us.' 'What do you think of infant baptism?' asked the magistrate. Lysken answered him: 'It is nothing more than the bathing in water of a small child and a purely human practice.' Thereupon the judges arose and conferred together; meanwhile Lysken confessed and explained the foundations of her faith in lucid words to the people. Then the judges pronounced her sentence. Lysken responded

with the following words to the court: 'You are now the judges, but the time will come when you will wish you had been shepherds; for there is one Lord and Master over all; He will judge you when the time comes. For we do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but with the princes, the powerful, the Lords of this world, who rule in the darkness of this world.' To this the court answered: 'Take her from the court.' Thereupon the people, filled with compassion, ran to her to look at her more closely. And Lysken spoke earnestly to them in a voice deeply moved: 'You should know that I am not suffering because I have committed robbery, murder, or any other evil deed, but wholly and alone for the sake of the Word of God which cannot be broken.' After that she was led back to the prison where two monks visited her in order to induce her to repudiate her faith. Their attempts failed. The following morning she was killed. They had dragged this lamb to the Scheldt River, stuffed her in a sack and drowned her before the people arrived so that only a few saw what happened. But it was granted a few people to witness her death. She faced death courageously and, quite composed, said: 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Thus she was taken away, and to the honor of God it happened that, by God's grace, many were gripped by the event. When the people streamed together and heard that she was already dead, it caused a great commotion among the masses; for it pained them as much as if she had been publicly executed. The people said: 'Thieves and murderers are brought publicly before the people; but their [the judge's] faithlessness is only the more apparent.'"

q) "A huge book-burning ceremony was connected with the execution of Jorjan Simons and Klement Dirks in Haarlem in the year 1557. Jorjan was a book-hawker and had dispersed a great number of baptist[38] works. But when it became apparent that the books were beginning to burn, such a commotion arose among the people that the officials quickly withdrew. When they had left, the people threw the books into the crowd which eagerly picked them up. Thus it happened through God's gracious providence that the truth, instead of being suppressed[39] as the officials had intended, was the more widely disseminated through the reading of so many books."

r) "Finally, even the officials and magistrates tired of the matter, for they disliked the cruelty of the bloodthirsty inquisitors."

2. In the *Grosse Geschichtsbuch unser Gemein* (The Great History of our Church) of 1524[40] we read concerning the suffering of our martyr-fathers and the source of their power to endure all of this: §7

a) These, who are a new cloud of witnesses for us and a pillar of fire that precedes us by night, these witnesses to the faith and Christian

Old Evangelical Martyrs, before, during and after Menno's Time:



a) Torture



b) Martyrs in the Hague.



c) Lysken Segerson is drowned.

heroes of God's truth, men and women, boys and girls, old and young, teachers and pupils,—in whose lives we see that God has poured out and imparted His grace and power in these end times as richly as was the case in early Christianity,—were executed through all kinds of torture and death. Some were stretched on the rack and torn apart so that they died from the torture; some were burned to ashes; some were roasted on pillars; some were torn with red-hot tongs; some were locked into houses and burned with them; some were hanged on trees, others, however, were executed with the sword, strangled and their bodies dismembered. Like lambs they were led in droves to the slaughter and murdered, as is the devil's manner, who has been a murderer from the very beginning. Many women were submerged in water, brought up again and asked if they wanted to recant; when they refused, they were submerged once more and drowned. Others were left to die of hunger in dark towers where they were robbed of the light of day. Still others were forced to experience the agony of lying tightly bound in deep caves among bats and vermin, where they rotted and were eventually destroyed. Many were starved for long periods before they were put to death. Some, who were deemed too young to be tried in court, were bound and horribly whipped. Many were treated with ingenious and unheard of cunning and roguery, with many sweet and polished words by priests, monks and doctors of the Scriptures, and with all kinds of false doctrine in order to win them; then again harsh threats, lies and terrible blasphemies were used to try to frighten them, all of which did not make them despair, however. Many, who suffered such severe imprisonment, sang songs of praise to their God, as though they were the happiest of people. Some, when they were led to their death, sang with a joyous and exalted voice as though they were on their way to a wedding and a meeting with the bridegroom. Many earnestly and sincerely admonished the watching crowd to repent and reform its ways. The rest, who escaped such treatment, were driven away and expelled from one country to another, from one place to another. They had to be like the owl and the night-raven, who dare not travel by day, and often they had stealthily to hide themselves and dwell amongst rocks and chasms, in the wild forests, or in ditches and the hollows of the earth. They were hunted down with dogs and hangmen's assistants, and pursued, like the birds in the sky, in order to catch them. When our Lord Jesus Christ will come to hold judgment with his many thousands of angels on His great Judgment Day, the earth will not be able to hide all the blood it has swallowed; when the sea will return again the dead which are in it, and those who have been burned to ashes will arise and come forth,—that will be a judgment different from the one now practiced by the world. Then the enemies will begin to confess and complain: "Oh, how foolish have we been! See how these people are counted among the children of God and share in the joys of the blessed. . . ."

b) "To the question of the persecutors, whence these people received the power to approach death with the joy of a bride meeting the bridegroom, the 'brothers and sisters' answered: They have drunk from the water which flowed from the sanctuary of God, from the fountain of life, and thereby acquired a heart which cannot be understood by the human mind. They have experienced that God helps them to carry the cross and have overcome the bitterness of death. The fire of God burned in them. They had set up their tents in heaven, not here on earth. The angel of the Lord has swung the sword before them so that the helmet of their salvation and the golden shield of David could not be struck from them. They heard and understood well the trumpet call in Zion; for that reason they conquered all pain and torture and were not frightened by it. Their holy disposition accounted the things of this world a mere shadow, for they had been assured greater things. God had educated them to know nothing, seek nothing, want nothing, love nothing except that eternal heavenly possession alone. —c) Therefore they exemplified more patience in their sufferings than their enemies did in their torturing!"

B.

THE DUTCH-PRUSSIAN ANABAPTISTS OR MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD

IV.

THE ANABAPTISTS (DOOPSGEZINDE) IN HOLLAND

§8 1. Beginnings. —a) According to Reiswitz and Wadzeck, it is impossible to demonstrate that the Anabaptists first made their appearance in the United Netherlands. On the contrary, according to the same authors the first historically discernible Anabaptists lived dispersed in Germany and Switzerland much earlier, and only later made their way to the Netherlands where they established small congregations. William I of Orange, governor of the Netherlands and ancestor of the reigning Queen Wilhelmina of Holland, was the first to tolerate[1] the Anabaptists in spite of the protests of the foremost ministers of the Reformed State Church. On the one hand, William of Orange extended toleration to the Anabaptists because of his own tolerant disposition,—a marvel in his own time—for he detested every violation of freedom of conscience. On the other hand, the Anabaptists had contributed large sums of money to a government in desperate straits, an action that brought them William's good will. This initial toleration was eventually extended to a complete equality with all the other Dutch Churches.

b) Nevertheless, according to Reiswitz and Wadzeck, this initial toleration was often placed in jeopardy, or at the very least interrupted, through spiteful slander; and only when their blameless life was recognized; when the innocence of their peculiar doctrines, upon which they placed so high a value that they willingly sacrificed life and property for them, was recognized; more particularly, when some amongst them became wealthy through their thrift and moderation, their honest industry and the sweat of their brows, and willingly came to the aid of their hard pressed government—were they granted freedom and the undisturbed exercise of their religion instead of being subjected to persecution. Bentheim, in his *Hollaendische Kirchen- und Schulstaat,* (The Dutch Church and School State) calls the Mennonites "honeybees of the republic" [thus far essentially according to Reiswitz and Wadzeck].



a) Dirk Philips (1504-1570). First Elder in Danzig.



Hans de Ries, author of the Dutch-Anabaptist Confession of Faith of 1580-1610 (*Confessio brevis*) and the Anabaptist hymn book of 1582.



c) Dr. Galenus Abrahams de Haan. Elder in Amsterdam about 1650.



d) Pastor Johannes Deknatel, Amsterdam (d. 1759).

c) At the same time, it should already be stated here that the later, very large, indeed nearly princely wealth of the Dutch Anabaptists, came to be a snare in accordance with the old proverb: "Piety produces wealth but wealth in turn devours piety!" (Cf. VI "Dutch Mennonites, Wealth.")

2. Decline of the Dutch Anabaptists (Doopsgezinde). a) The happy, rapid development of the Anabaptist congregations which took place under Menno's guidance, and his energetic activity during the prime of his life in the midst and in spite of all the persecution, lasted only as long as his labor. The twilight of his life coincides with the decline of the first and only general "golden age" of the old evangelical-Anabaptist congregations bearing his name! It seems like a sad allegory when the grand old organizer and bishop of our fellowship now and then signs his letters: "Menno the cripple." Although he suffered from a badly healed broken leg and spent the declining years of his life quite alone with his daughter, he kept busy writing in his Zoar at Fresenburg. But even more painful to him was the fact that quarrels and dissensions (the "Anabaptist illness") could not be avoided. The question concerning the ban was a major bone of contention. As we noted above, Dirk Philips (the first elder in Danzig, Prussia) and Leonhard Bouwens, the strict interpreters of the ban, influenced even Menno in this direction. "Shunning" was required in all respects even from family members and marriage partners! Those who held different opinions on this issue were themselves banned, as were those who differed on dogmatic and moral issues. The splintering of the Anabaptist movement, begun during Menno's lifetime, continued after his death. In the end five or more important factions[2] emerged: the Flemish, the Frisians, the High Germans (South Germans), the Waterlanders, the old-Flemish[3] (the strictest adherents to Menno's teachings and originally immersionists), and the old-Frisians. Beards, buttons or hooks and eyes, pockets (visible) and collars—all of these became matters of faith, united or divided congregations and factions, all of which regarded themselves as belonging to the only "true" faith. The strictest, the "best" or "most precise," were the Flemish; the most latitudinarian, the Waterlanders, who never adopted the name "Mennonite" but rather continued to call themselves "Doopsgezinde"—Anabaptists—as all the Dutch Mennonites today do and have done for some time past. These divisions were extended to the North German and Prussian congregations of our immediate forefathers. Thus was their power, which after Menno's[4] time should have been devoted, "even at the cost of their own life, to rescuing the entire world for Christ from its evil and godless ways," dissipated in dissension. Under the guise of "cleansing" the church, they threw their brother out of the house because his beard was either too long or too short, because of a button or hook, because of a shibboleth or "Sib."! §9

Finally, after the church had thus been cut up into little pieces by the proponents as well as the opponents of the "strict ban," peace-loving men finally came to power around 1580. These strove for reconciliation on the basis of love, unity in essentials, and freedom in regard to externals and matters of minor import. The "Olive Branch" (ca. 1630) was a kind of formula of concord (Agreement, Comparison, "Summary"). In 1640, 74 ministers representing the three main groups—the Flemish, Frisian, and High German (South German) Mennonites—united. An excerpt from these three confessions of faith (i.e., 1. the "Olive Branch" of 1627-30; 2. the "South German or Frisian" of 1630; and 3. the "Dortrecht" confession of the United Flemish of 1632) constitutes the confession repeatedly referred to below. It is called the "Rudnerweide" and "Kronsweide" confession in the "Glaubensbekenntnis der Mennoniten Brueder Gemeinde" (Confession of Faith of the M.B. Church) of 1900/1902 as well as that of the "combined Flemish, Frisian and South German Anabaptist-Mennonite congregations." Only a few very strict groups, such as the old-Flemish and old-Frisians, refused to join this association.

b) But before this formal union could gain in strength, before it could be established, a new enemy in the form of Socinianism or Antitrinitarianism, also called Unitarianism,[5] assailed this fellowship—weakened by incessant quarrels over dogma and ceremonies, a fellowship bound to ceremony, catechism and a sterile orthodoxy rather than to a warm inner faith. Two Italian Protestant theologians, Socinus the elder, who died in Zurich in 1562, and his nephew, who died in Poland in 1604 (where a Unitarian Church was established which exists to this day in Hungary as an officially recognized Protestant body), deviated from the orthodox Christian teaching on the consubstantiality of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There was no denial of Christ as the Redeemer, though His accomplishments were deprecated and human will and man's capacity to perform good works, overly accentuated. These ideas reached the Dutch Mennonite congregations by way of their Polish brethren. The nephew of Socinus attempted to win our forefathers in Poland to his views, and to a certain extent he succeeded, as can be seen from a study of church history. Our specifically Mennonite histories hardly touch on this subject, if at all. After the initial period of persecution had ended, they concerned themselves rather with such matters as the acquisition or loss of living and trading rights, with the privileges and industry of our ancestors, generally speaking in glowing terms of their great piety, religious faithfulness and morality, so that the uninitiated reader is forced to assume that our ancestors were, without exception, holy men and martyrs. Thus the story of the immigration to and settlement of the Chortitza and Molotschna colonies comes as a considerable shock![6] In order to get the Polish Mennonite congregations to merge with his

church, the younger Socinus could make broad concessions, though he spoke deprecatingly of baptism.[7]

c) At about this time a life and death struggle[8] broke out in the Dutch Reformed Church over the issue of election (predestination), as opposed to free will, between orthodox Calvinists and the Arminians (named for Arminius, a reformed pastor and professor, and opponent of the Calvinists). These Arminians in turn went to extremes, to the extent that some of them came close to speaking disparagingly of God's saving grace and glorifying human free will. (According to his writings and the judgment of Protestant authorities, Menno's position on this issue was an orthodox one, i.e., not Arminian; his view of election and free will was a moderate intermediary position, leaning more toward the predestinarian[9] position, as Luther did; though not as predestinarian as the greatest Baptist of our time, C. H. Spurgeon, who, however, shares Menno's views on war and the oath.) The more open, pious, and, on the issue of predestination, more moderate Arminians (also called Remonstrants[10]), formed the Collegiant brotherhood (from "collegia"—a gathering, especially for Bible studies), or simply the "Brethren," also called "Rhynsburger" for the city of Rhynsburg which was their headquarters. According to Zoeckler, they formed a "minor sect of the Mennonites"; according to Meusel they "walked in the ways of Menno"; according to still others they were a "mixture of Mennonites and Remonstrants." They baptized only upon confession of faith by immersion, though they did not necessarily demand baptism for membership if the person in question considered his baptism sufficient; they practiced "open communion" and were extremely tolerant. Ramseyer, the Swiss-French Baptist, believes this tolerance led to their demise?! They reached their high point around 1650, and were to be found in Holland and Northwest Germany from about 1620 to 1720 (cf. further *#13*, n. and *#136*, k).

d) The Socinian and Arminian movements sent their ripples into the Mennonite communities. People were tired of restraints; the sterile orthodoxy had not revived them; and yet they were used to quarreling and schisms! Thus another major schism took place first and foremost in the Netherlands and then in the Dutch speaking congregations of Northwestern Germany, Poland and Prussia. It had its beginning in the large Amsterdam congregation. The immediate cause of the schism were two elders of that congregation—Galens Abrahams de Haan and Samuel Apostool—both gifted speakers and learned theologians, but professionally doctors of medicine and important in their field. Dr. de Haan leaned toward Socinianism and Arminianism and was latitudinarian. Dr. Apostool was a Mennonite predestinarian or orthodox.[11] De Haan's supporters were the more numerous. They met in a church (a private house) on whose gable the image of a lamb happened to be carved; the

followers of Dr. Apostool met in a place that had a sun carved in its gable. Thus the latitudinarians in Amsterdam and its environs were called "Lambites" while the orthdox were called "Sunites." One should not assume, however, that de Haan and his supporters were "unbelievers": those who best represented the movement (as de Haan himself) could be called what Julius Koebner has termed "rationalist believers." (They were similar to the mystically-rationalistic Hans Denk, d. 1527, an outstanding leader of the South German Anabaptists). This schism, this latitudinarian attitude in matters religious among a substantial segment of the Dutch Doopsgezinde, together with their great wealth and business interests, prepared the way for the real Rationalism—the predominance of reason in matters of faith; this was in turn followed by religious indifference and a massive decline in membership.

e) The Prussian congregations of Dutch descent, although retaining an orthodox faith, never experienced a spring of renewed life nor a rich harvest; repeated schisms had left them weakened and incapacitated. (cf. Chap. V.)

f) The Swiss and South German congregations also remained orthodox. These, however, were subjected to such endless and terrible persecutions that any kind of growth appeared impossible: toward the end of the 17th century (1688-cf. below) and extending beyond the first half of the 19th century such a massive emigration of their members to America took place that only a remnant remained behind in these countries (Switzerland, the Palatinate, etc.), but in whose midst a great revival has taken place in the last half century. The Dutch Anabaptists reacted to these persecutions with an amazing magnanimity and spirit of brotherly love, expressed through massive financial support, hospitality and the active diplomatic intervention of the Dutch government. (Compare *#13,* n; *#22,* e, u, f; #136, *e*].

§10 3. The decline in membership of the Dutch Mennonites threatened to reach the proportions of a demise. According to C. H. A. van der Smissen and B. C. Roosen, their decline (while the population generally increased) was so catastrophic that whereas they had numbered some 140,000 in 1700, by 1800 they totalled only 40,000! But even under these circumstances God provided men who stepped into the breach: Jakob Denner (d. 1749, cf. *#136,* m), Johannes Deknatel (d. 1759, cf. above *#4*), Cornelis Ris ("Glaubenslehre"[12] of 1773) as well as others who were not only well-educated but also pious men, actively involved in the teaching ministry of the Church; all these men were characterized by the firmness of their convictions as well as their tolerance of and affection toward all of Christ's disciples. The concept of the "one universal Christian Church" was a significant aspect of their thought. An interesting man

was J. Sinstra (d. 1800), an outstanding minister of the Waterlander congregation in Harlingen, Friesland. The Reformed ministers, once they had overcome the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort, 1618-19, demonstrated great concern for the orthodoxy of the Mennonite ministers. Sinstra for example, was too latitudinarian for them, and through their efforts they were instrumental in getting the authorities to deny him the right to preach for many years! By 1757, however, such a change in the climate of opinion had occurred that the Frisian provincial legislature could persuade Sinstra to come to Leeuwarden, the capital of Friesland, so that the representatives could attend his services in the local Mennonite church while the legislature was in session.

4. The Dutch Mennonites (Doopsgezinde) Today. §11

a) Today the Dutch Mennonite Churches are well ordered. They number about 70,000 persons (members and children) with about 130 congregations and an equal number of pastors (called "teachers, Praedikanten or Domines"). Despite considerable congregational independence, the congregations are nevertheless closely tied to one another through mutual financial support, a common seminary and the exchange of ministers, etc.

The first tentative and irregular education of a trained ministry began in Amsterdam under the direction of Dr. de Haan and Jakob Deknatel, among others, in the first half of the 18th century. The first teachers at the seminary (at first only one, then two at the same time) were the professors Niewenhuis (d. 1761), Osterbaan, Hesselink, R. Koopmanns, L. Koopmanns, Samuel Mueller, de Hoof Scheffer (d. 1893), and S. Hoekstra (d. 1898); in recent years, S. Cramer, and de Buissy (doctors of theology). These men were also professors at the University of Amsterdam, with which the seminary has been intimately associated for a long time. Dutch Anabaptist students of theology may spend the first three years studying at any Dutch university,—though most of them study in Amsterdam, more particularly at the seminary there. Here they are examined and accredited. The congregations, in accordance with a longstanding policy openly arrived at, choose their ministers only from the ranks of those thus accredited. These Dutch Anabaptist theologians are highly regarded in the Protestant theological world (cf. further "e" and *#22, g*).

The largest Anabaptist congregation of the Netherlands is located in Amsterdam numbering some 10,000 persons of which over half are baptized members (next to Chortitza in Southern Russia the largest and most compact Mennonite congregation of the world), with 5(6?) pastors. There are also congregations in Witmarsum, Menno's birthplace, and Pingjum, his first pastorate. Of special interest to us is the congregation

in Zaandam or Saardam (with over 1,000 members) where Peter the Great learned the shipbuilding trade. The smallest congregation, located in Oudorp with some 12 members!—25 persons all told—(ca. 1888), has its own theologically educated and salaried pastor, church building and parsonage, an excellent example of the way in which the Dutch Mennonites provide for one another! Nevertheless, the religious persuasion of most of the congregations and their pastors is not what we would consider evangelical orthodoxy nor piety. A typical representative of this majority Dutch Mennonite theological position is the pastor of the North German congregation of Emden, Dr. theol. Appeldoorn (Dutch by birth and training), who has become famous in the last two years as a consequence of the so-called "Appeldoorn controversy." This controversy was the occasion for an energetic protest against Dr. Appeldoorn's opinions as well as a testimonial in favor of the faith in the spirit of Menno and the Apostles by the West Prussian, South German, Swiss and American Mennonites. Our good colleague and editor of the *Mennonitische Blaetter*, P. H. v.d. Smissen, has also taken a clear and decisive stand in this matter. Even the Amsterdam Missionary Society (cf. below *##300 & 307*) has openly criticized Dr. Appeldoorn and sought to calm our Russian missionary friends. But there are also a goodly number of truly pious and Bible-believing Mennonites in Holland who cling to the old faith and who are our spiritual brothers in the fullest sense of the word, not only our brothers according to the flesh. The "Anabaptist Missionary Society" (cf. *#300* etc.) and its executive committee: Bierens de Haan and Pastor Leendertz, among others, are from this group. It is common knowledge that many of the young men from our Russian Mennonite congregations are active as missionaries in this organization, a fact clearly apparent in the missionary report (cf. *#300* etc.) of the former missionary, Elder H. Dirks—Gnadenfeld, in which we also meet the senior Anabaptist missionary of the Netherlands, Peter Jansz, and other Dutch missionaries.

Periodical publications of the Dutch Anabaptists are: *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* (a scholarly quarterly), *Zondagsbode* and *Kleine Mededeeler* (a missionary publication), etc.

b) The Dutch have developed their church organization in a unique way (something that is also true of the North German city congregations of Hamburg-Altona, Emden, Neuwied, Krefeld etc., as well as of Danzig and Elbing in West Prussia); in contrast to the West and East Prussian congregations which derive from them, as well as those of South Germany, Switzerland and France, who generally, with the exception of those in the Palatinate and a few others, employ unsalaried ministers and elders with any kind of an education, the Dutch employ only theologically trained and salaried ministers.[13]

c) In Southern Russia, especially in the M.B. churches during the last thirty years, the attempt is being made slowly to become freed from this one-sided West Prussian system and to move gradually in the direction of the natural and correct apostolic pattern, a combination of the above positions, where, in the case of need, the elder (leading minister) is paid a salary, and where, increasingly, a growing number of individuals are voluntarily acquiring a theological training. Nevertheless, a minister is not chosen because of the nature and extent of his education, but rather because of a genuine piety and ability. The most popular theological schools are: Barmen-Missionshaus; Johanneum; Hamburg Seminary; St. Chrischona; Basel Seminary and University; Neukirchen, and more recently Bethel College in the United States—Newton, Kansas, and the Alliance Bible School in Berlin. Characteristic of the Russian Mennonite ministers is that a relatively large number have come into the ministry from the ranks of the elementary school teachers, or such as have been school teachers, which makes them less educated than their Prussian counterparts; yet since they must earnestly pursue both the Russian and the German languages, their level of intelligence is not thereby decreased! To these there are gradually being added others from the higher teaching ranks. Nevertheless, those who have become ministers out of necessity and those educated as school teachers still far outnumber those formally trained as theologians. Having our own schools to train ministers has long since become a matter of serious discussion. Yet creation of such schools is problematical primarily for theological and institutional reasons, least of all for financial reasons. Indeed, the governing authorities have long since granted permission for their creation; the congregations, however, have declined to establish them. Perhaps the best temporary expedient would be the extension and increased frequency of the established Bible courses, held in the midst of the spiritual congregation and within the confines of the legally established places of worship, as a theological supplement to our fine secondary schools and other institutions of higher learning for younger ministers and those aspiring to become ministers, because they would entail neither new financial expenditures nor church administrative novelties, and because the number of those able to lead such Bible courses in all Mennonite groups is increasing yearly. Why travel to distant regions when such treasures lie so near! Certain especially gifted young men eager for an education will in any case seek to acquire a formal theological education in the universities of other countries, but we should educate the main group at home, and truly educate them: in the schools of our churches and our land and then more profoundly in the ever recurring Bible and Deeper Life courses. May God help us![14] He, who through the spirit of life and freedom, is gradually freeing us from the confines of the inherited, one-sided

Prussian system, will also graciously protect our congregations from the equally one-sided and therefore unwholesome system of the Dutch Mennonites through His Spirit of moderation and reasonableness according to the principle: "All is yours," and "judge all things." The latter is a system which is a partial copy of the education and support of the ministers in the state churches, and has long since been mercilessly judged by its own great shortcomings. Menno was no opponent of an honorarium, as many would have it: for example, he regularly received 60 imperial thalers a year from the congregations in Friesland (cf. *Saemtliche Werke: Briefe an die Gemeinde in Friesland* [Letters to the Congregation in Friesland], and v.d. Smissen: *Glaubenslehre und Geschichte* [Doctrine and History], p. 60). Yet he justly criticizes the often princely salaries of the churchmen of his time (cf. the end of his "Withdrawal"), which they very often wasted in the most godless ways. It is interesting that some have tried to demonstrate, on the basis of I Corinthians 9 (where Paul clearly establishes the right of the minister to be supported by the congregation and merely states that he made an exception to the rule in Corinth), that a paid ministry is not Scriptural. It is a great honor and grace if one can follow the saintly Paul in this regard. But one should never regard himself of more account than he is! How sad and foolish it is when large and wealthy congregations repeatedly lectured their spiritual leaders with "gratis, gratis!" and then allowed these, their spiritually impoverished shepherds, who were ostensibly following the example of the Apostle Paul, to copy their sermons out of the books of alien "hirelings and day laborers!" Compare also Phil. 4:15-18 in connection with I Corinthians 9:14 and Luke 10:7. Why do these congregations, who, as a consequence of this their "truly apostolical (?) principle" and "love preachers" degenerate into a "honey-thief's beehive," force their preachers as well as their reading members to load their bookshelves with the works of Lutherans, the Reformed, Baptists, Methodists, Moravian Brethren, etc., among which a Mennonite work must always be a valuable rarity?— Why do these congregations not demand, as that more than deservedly blamed Roman Catholic Church does, that their spiritual shepherds also remain celibate, according to the "best" advice and preference of Paul (I Cor. 7), rather than be satisfied with an imitation of the "lesser" (?) example of "Cephas and the other apostles," who took wives and were supported by their congregations ("not to work" for their livelihood, I Cor. 9:5, 6)? As far as the education of our spiritual shepherds is concerned, the Word of God has not portrayed Moses, that great architect of the Old Covenant, as "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and the Chaldean-educated prophet Daniel, for nothing. And the schools of the prophets! Furthermore, it was no accident that Paul, the professional Hebrew theologian (who was also no stranger to

Greek wisdom) and student of Gamaliel, Barnabas and Appollo, both Greek-educated Jews (Hellenists), as well as the learned Greeks Luke, Timothy, and Titus, were placed at the side of the first apostles who were "uneducated laymen." An observant, objective look into the Acts of the Apostles and the other books of the New Testament is sufficient to recognize what an important role the learned Paul played in the New Testament edifice, not as a consequence of his theological training, but certainly with its help, after he had placed himself and everything he possessed into the service of Christ. Menno did the same. We have written concerning his education above. Through whose efforts do we possess the translations of our Bible, exegetical works, fundamental church histories, etc., without which our Christian and congregational existence would be unthinkable? Not through the work of uneducated lay ministers, even though we recognize and praise their importance and indispensability in the cure of souls and the building of the church. Indeed, when we speak of the "laity" of the eleven apostles, we should never forget that they received three years of very personal training from the "Master" Himself! May God prevent that there should ever come a time when our congregations will only have a paid and professionally trained clergy; may He also graciously preserve them from falling back into old errors and prejudices in regard to a salaried clergy and their education! (Compare further "Elder Cornelius Warkentin.")

d) The method by which the Dutch Mennonites call and support their ministers portrayed above has its primary reason, aside from the growing religious indifference, in the fact that the Dutch Mennonites are overwhelmingly involved in trade and commerce or are professional people living in the cities (similar to the North German congregations), in contrast to the vast majority of other Mennonites scattered over the world, especially their West Prussian and Russian descendants. Just as the "four hides (of land)" are characteristic of the West Prussian Mennonites, the "Vollwirtschaft" (the same four hides) and the "Chutor" (estate) are characteristic of the Russian, or the farm of the American, even so it is typical that the Dutch Mennonite (and those of Hamburg, Danzig, Elbing, etc.) is to be found in the prosperous workshop, factory, store, warehouse, or in the bank of the East and West Indies merchants.

e) We shall add to this chapter on Menno and the Mennonites, specifically the Dutch Mennonites, a suitably illuminating assessment from the *Calwer Bibel Lexikon,* II, p. 168.

"Even though Menno had many unique dogmatic-speculative opinions[15] (with regard to Christology), the central thrust of his efforts was the creation of a pure church separated from the world, and consequently a renewal of the individual through a conversion which he

saw essentially as a moral cleansing under the influence of and in obedience to God's Word. Baptism, according to Menno, has absolutely no mystical [mysteriously operative] significance, but is rather a symbolic [allegorical] expression of the already completed conversion, and consequently only appropriate for adults. These fundamental viewpoints, together with the rejection of the oath, are still operative today in the congregations which claim descent from Menno. In contrast, as a consequence of many disagreements and schisms, the strictness of the old church discipline, the prohibition against military service, and the assumption of political offices have gradually fallen into abeyance, and, since the second half of the 17th century (and later consistently more so), even with regard to dogmatic issues—at least in the Netherlands—the liberal wing, which would recognize no binding confession of faith but wanted simply to adhere to the Bible ('Galenists' after their leader Dr. Galenus Abrahams [De Haan] or 'Lambites'), gained the upper hand over the old orthodox 'Apostoolites' (after their leader Dr. Apostool) or 'Sunites.' In order to avoid any indication of subservience to man, this more liberal element with regard to matters of faith and discipline even dropped the name 'Mennonite' and called themselves *Taufgesinnte*. These have gradually absorbed the entire Mennonite community in the Netherlands and today constitute an important church membership, intellectually alive and scholarly, constitutionally independent, who, in matters of faith, encompass great extremes from a simple biblical faith to the broadest radicalism. . . . Thus, while the Mennonite name has, strangely enough, died out in the old homeland, it lives on, together with more of the old simple, earnest and strict spirit of faith of Menno—albeit without fanaticism and aggressive [or combative] essence—in the few congregations in Switzerland [16] (where a schism also took place in the 17th century over issues pertaining to greater or lesser severity in matters of discipline and life style—the adherents of Jakob Amman,[17] who regarded the use of buttons instead of hooks and eyes and a shaven face as conceit and sin, were called 'Haeftler' or 'Baertler'), in Germany (congregations in Alsace, Baden, the Palatinate, Wuerttemberg, Rhineland, Friesland, Hamburg, Friedrichstadt, and Lithuania), in France and Russia (immigrated Germans). The most prosperous and numerous development of the Mennonites has taken place in North America (200,000 members)."

V.
THE MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS IN PRUSSIA

1. *The Setting*

§12 a) The Dutch Anabaptists, who emigrated during the period of persecution in the Netherlands before that country's liberation from the Spanish-Jesuit yoke, provided the base and greatest number for the Mennonite congregations in Prussia, our (the Russian Mennonite) forefathers.

b) Earlier, Prussia was Slavic-Polish territory. Shortly after 1200, the celibate knights of the Teutonic Order, which had arisen in Palestine during the Crusades, came to Prussia in order to "convert" by means of fire and sword the Slavic Prussians (Prussen, Borussen), Lithuanians, Kashubians, etc., to Roman Catholicism and the German culture. In the course of time, these knights became vassals of the Polish kings. In 1525 Albrecht, the master of the order, together with the majority of his knights, became Protestant, married, and was given the Order's territory of East Prussia, with the title of duke, which he held as a fief of the king of Poland. When his son died childless, East Prussia came into the hands of the Margraves of Hohenzollern and the Electors of Brandenburg, but not to Germany, for, like West Prussia, it became a part of Germany only in the 19th century (1866 into the North German Union, and 1871 into the Empire). In 1660 the princes of Brandenburg became sovereign rulers in Prussia, independent of Poland; and in 1701 the Elector of Brandenburg took on the title of "King in Prussia," with Koenigsberg as the coronation city, but as Elector of Brandenburg he remained a vassal of the Hapsburg Emperor. Gradually, the collective lands controlled by the Hohenzollern came to be called the "Kingdom of Prussia," which, through the acquisition of Polish and German territories, became ever larger and more powerful until it became the most prominent part of the new German Empire, whose emperor is always the current King of Prussia.

c) Our Mennonite forebears always had to deal with this originally Slavic-Polish Prussia, the present Prussian provinces: East Prussia, with the cities and administrative center of Koenigsberg and Gumbinnen, and West Prussia, with its administrative centers of Danzig and Marienwerder and the cities: Danzig, Marienwerder, Elbing, Marienburg, Schwetz, Graudenz, Thorn, and the borough Tiegenhoff ("T'hoff"). All these names play a significant role in the history of our forefathers and in the stories of our immigrant forebears. The actual scene of our Prussian history, however, was West Prussia and the region of the free city of Danzig; the first came to Prussia from Poland in 1772, the second in 1793. Only the small group of those of our immigrant forefathers who

came from Gnadenfeld (and a few from Franzthal, etc.) actually came from the German Empire: these lived in Brandenburg (in Brenkenhofswalde and Franzthal, etc.) to which they had moved in 1760 from the region around Schwetz in West Prussia.

2. *The Origin*

§13 a) According to Reiswitz and Wadzeck, one cannot determine with any accuracy when the first Anabaptists arrived in Prussia. The members of the Prussian congregations, for the most part simple country folk, did not write much. Everything that was known about these things in 1820 had been orally passed on from one generation to another.

b) According to the Prussian historian Hartknoch the first Anabaptists came to Prussia from Silesia. He names Eccelius and Tankerus (according to others Fabian Takelius) as their teachers. These appear to have been Bohemian-Moravian quietists, that is nonresistant Hussite brethren (of Slavic origin). Reiswitz and Wadzeck marvel at the fact that these could be called Anabaptists. It had been deliberately forgotten that these Bohemian-Moravian brethren had practiced believer's baptism from 1467 to about 1535, as had a portion of the Waldensians, with which the pacifistic Hussites, when they organized themselves as the *Unitas Fratrum* (brotherhood) in 1467, had come into intimate contact because they had requested ordination[18] of their bishops at the hands of the Waldensian bishops. Like the Waldensians, they too refused the oath and military service; they also practiced footwashing. With regard to their dogma, however, they seem, like the Waldensians, never to have fully clarified all the issues or severed themselves completely from Roman Catholic ideas until the Reformation.[19] But a life in imitation of Christ (and as a consequence a strict church discipline) was for both the chief dogma. It was the Lutheran and Calvinist reform movements which aided them in clarifying their dogmatic beliefs, whereas for the Anabaptist movement Menno Simons was most important. Unfortunately, precisely at the time when Menno was rebaptized, the Bohemian Brethren gave up believer's baptism in order to win the friendship and protection of the Saxon reformers, and instituted confirmation or "the renewing of the baptismal vow" in its place (ca. 1535); nevertheless as late as 1560-70 the Lutheran historian Flacius complained that this act of confirmation "lacked only the water in order to become a rebaptism."[20] These concessions, however, have not prevented them from being tragically destroyed, whereas the Mennonite Anabaptists have, in spite of the most severe persecutions, never had fewer than ten thousand members. Like the Bohemian-Moravian Brethren, the Waldensians of Savoy and the Piedmont also dropped the practice of believer's baptism[21] and instituted infant baptism in order to win the approval of the Genevan Reformers, and later also, in contrast to their old

evangelical usage, reached for the sword to defend themselves from religious persecution! The present Waldensians, existing in only a small remnant—ca. 18,000, according to some 25,000, according to others, fewer—have retained much that is good from their early history and constitute a salutary evangelical element in Italy. In regard to the Bohemian-Moravian Brethren, the remnant which was able to survive their persecutions was gathered by Count Zinzendorf together with other German believers and organized as the "Moravian Brethren" (1725). This group is more familiarly known to us as the Zinzendorf or Herrnhuter brotherhood, their first location on the property of Count Zinzendorf, Herrnhut. It was the last ordained bishop of the old brotherhood, the court preacher Jablonsky in Berlin (who had been ordained bishop by the genial and pious pedagogue, the *Unitas* bishop Amos Comenius), who transferred the bishopric to the new group by consecrating David Ritschmann and Count Zinzendorf. Thus the descendants of the old Waldensian and Moravian churches (churches under the cross), have, as is apparent from the above and some other things that will follow, maintained themselves to the present in three ecclesiastical forms: in the evangelical Waldensian Church of northern Italy, the Moravian Brethren and the Mennonite-Anabaptist brotherhood.[22]

c) According to Hartknoch, therefore, the first Anabaptists in Prussia came from Silesia, while Reiswitz and Wadzeck believe that these were Moravian Brethren. Such frequently recurring family names among our Prussian-Russian Mennonite brotherhood as Sawatzky (Sawadsky), Koslowsky, Rogalsky, Delesky, Selewsky, Retzlaf or Ratzlaf (Rodoslaw?), perhaps even Spenst (Uspensky?) point to Slavic, that is Czecho-Moravian and Polish elements. (The Bohemian-Moravian Brethren had also spread to many parts of Poland.)

d) The spiritual importance of the first known Anabaptists of Prussia is apparent (according to Reiswitz and Wadzeck) from the complaints of an important contemporary Lutheran minister of Koenigsberg in East Prussia, the bishop Polyander. In 1530 he complained that the Elector Albrecht no longer regarded him as highly as previously and that, "since he listened to the fanatics," he attended his sermons only infrequently. Thereupon the radicals were put to silence!

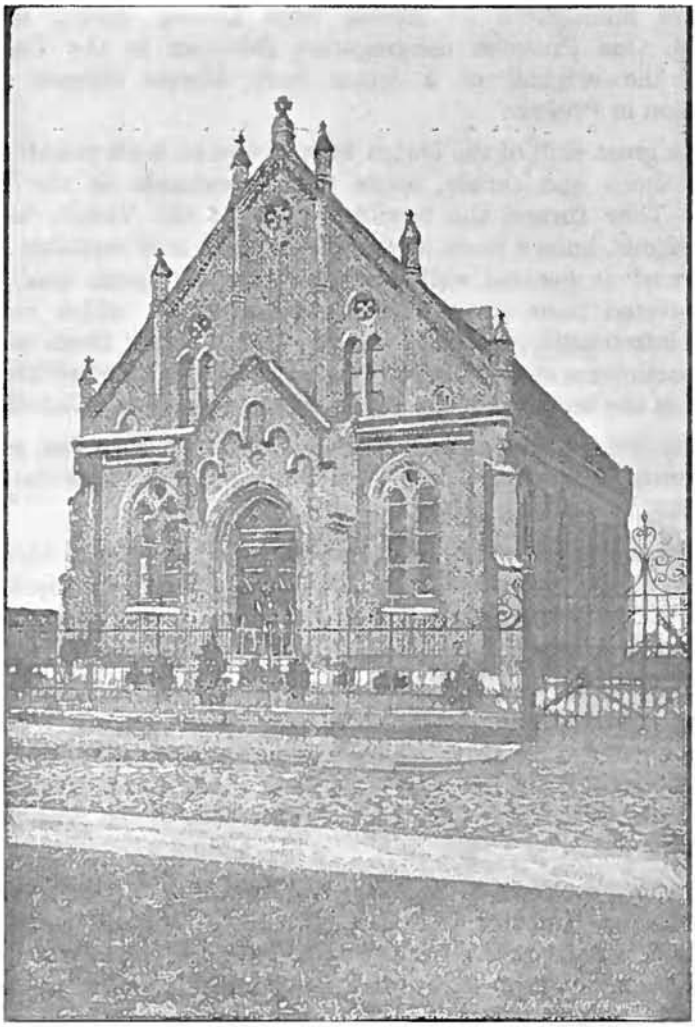
e) The true, later followers of Menno's teachings (with whom the Moravians in Prussia naturally intermingled), according to Reiswitz and Wadzeck, first arrived in Prussia between 1540-49 from the Netherlands. Aside from authentic documents, still preserved by the Prussian congregations, the Dutch origin of the majority of the Prussian Mennonites is proven by their Christian and family names, the family and inheritance ties which still existed between the Prussian and Dutch



a) Ohrlofferfelde Mennonite Church (since united with Ladekopp) in West Prussia.



b) Ladekopp Mennonite Church (since united with Ohrlofferfelde) in West Prussia.



c) Affiliate of the Heubuden Mennonite Church, Marienburg, West Prussia.

Mennonites around 1820, Dutch customs and life style, their knowledge of the Dutch language, and Dutch religious books[23] [which our immigrants brought along with them to Molotschna]. The main proof for their Dutch origin, however, is that the Dutch language was originally used in the church services, in Danzig as late as 1790 [the first Chortitza Mennonites immigrated to Russia from Danzig during the years 1787-1789]. One Prussian congregation [Montau in the Delta] still possesses the original of a letter from Menno Simons to that congregation in Prussia.

f) The great skill of the Dutch Mennonites to drain marsh lands by means of dams and canals, made them invaluable to the Prussian landlords. They turned the terrible moors of the Vistula and other marshy regions, known to us as the "lowlands," into veritable gardens. They themselves became well-to-do and their landlords wealthy. The latter protected them against severe persecutions, which threatened them not infrequently, and later made it possible for them to acquire precious documents of privileges, many of the originals of which are still preserved in the archives of the Prussian congregations [Ohrlofferfelde].

g) The first teacher, elder or bishop of the West Prussian, especially of the Danzig Mennonites, was Dirk Philips, Menno's co-worker who died in 1567.

h) High noblemen seem, even if seldom, to have joined their ranks. Thus, according to Reiswitz and Wadzeck, Ciska von Ciechanoviec, cupbearer in the Polish principality of Lithuania, joined them. Even the Dutch church annals report that a certain knight Gerrit von den Krommendam came over to them.

i) The present congregation of Montau in the Danzig *Werder* was already in existence by 1570; its elder was Hans van Swinden. And in 1586 the delegates from five West and East Prussian congregations met together in the first historically known conference of the West Prussian Mennonites.

k) The persecutions in Austria, Bohemia and Moravia under the Jesuit-influenced Emperor Rudolf II (d. 1612) brought the Prussian congregations new members from the Slavic and South German regions. Therefore we again find Slavic and South German elements entering the main stream here.

l) The Anabaptists in East Prussia's Koenigsberg and Prussian-Lithuania's Gumbinnen were much fewer in number even though, according to the foregoing, they appeared there first. While they still numbered 12,000 strong in West Prussia after the most important emigration to Russia (and America), there were, according to Reiswitz and Wadzeck, fewer than 1,000 in East Prussia in 1788, that is before the

great migration. According to the evidence in our possession, the East Prussia Mennonite artisans (weavers, etc.) and businessmen of Koenigsberg seem to have played an important role and won the good will of the magistrates through their many-sided industrial pursuits, just as they did in the cities of West Prussia, North Germany, and the Netherlands. At the moment, however, the Koenigsberg congregation is close to dying out (50 members in 1888). In contrast, the congregation in the Prussian-Lithuanian administrative district of Gumbinnen is some 800 members strong, and seems to be related to our Molotschna and Chortitza "Friesens": the Rudnerweidner and Kronsweidner seem to be related in race and constitution,[24] to judge by their family names, among other things. According to our evidence, Dutch, Austrian, and Swiss elements have come together to make up this congregation.

m) In 1711, when fierce persecutions prevailed in the cantons of Bern and Zurich, Swiss Mennonites (Anabaptists) came to the first king of Prussia, Frederick I, and asked him for homes, which were granted them in East Prussia (Prussian-Lithuania).

n) Thus, according to spirit and blood, we Mennonites are the heirs of the Waldensians, the Bohemian-Moravian Brethren, the South German, Swiss and (according to blood line) predominantly the heirs of the Dutch Anabaptists, who were the first to be called Mennonites. It also undoubtedly proves our relationship to the "Renewed (Zinzendorf-Herrnhuter) Brotherhood" and to those English Baptists who descended from the Dutch Anabaptists between 1611 and 1640 (partially from the strict Mennonites of Amsterdam, partially from the more liberal Anabaptists, the Rhynsburger brothers,[25] who "walked in the paths of Menno," or Collegiants, also known as Dompelaars, i.e., Dunckers). Members of the English Baptists[26] included John Milton,[27] author of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained;* John Bunyan, author of *The Pilgrim's Progress;* William Carey, the great missionary and equally great linguist (the father of Sanskrit studies); Anna and Adoniram Judson (American) and C. H. Spurgeon. Essentially through Zinzendorf's[28] songs and Spurgeon's sermons and writings streams of blessings have come to us. And is it necessary to mention Oncken, Kobner, and August Liebig? By reaching back with courage and humility to that "which was from the beginning," Menno Simons erected this wonderfully simple yet comfortable house in which we live, "on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, of whom Jesus Christ is the cornerstone." The above, together with the evangelical Pietists like Philipp Hiller, Gerhard Tersteegen, Ludwig Hofacker, Friedrich W. Krummacher as well as many others through their writings, and Pastor Wuest personally, have all brought us new light, new warmth and new food into the once very good, but now nearly empty, cold, and barren

house of Menno. What a holy spiritual ancestry! "What a noble people, what a chosen multitude!"—decendants of that multitude portrayed for us in Hebrews 11, and precursors of those two glorious multitudes which appear to us in Revelation 7. But—"do not think that you can say to yourselves: We have Abraham for a father!" Rather: "Remember your teachers who taught you the Word of God; observe their end and follow their faith!" But in such a manner that "Jesus Christ, yesterday and today, the head of the Church, have the preeminence in all things" and that He remain our only and decisive "Master" (Matt. 3:9; Heb. 13:7-8; Col. 1:18; Matt. 23:9).

3. *Vicissitudes of the Mennonites in Prussia*
(According to Reiswitz and Wadzeck and others)

§14 Now that we have presented a brief summary of our pedigree as well as our spiritual and blood ancestors (shame on him who forgets his mother and is ashamed of his faithful nurse!), we want to attempt to present a brief portrayal (derived from various sources) of the Prussian Mennonites.

a) *Under Polish Rule.* The Mennonites of Prussia also suffered persecutions, even though not bloody ones. They were especially threatened with repeated expulsion. Thus it happened, among other things at the provincial diet of Marienburg of 1646, that the lord of Pomerellen angrily demanded that they be banished. He accused especially the Danzig city fathers of being the cause of their toleration and thus also the cause of the fact that God had visited them with the flood and other events because of these heretics. In the lively debate that followed, Jan Dzialinsky, an economist from Marienburg, and a few other nobles came to the aid of the Mennonites, demonstrating that these people brought the greatest benefits to the land in that they improved old and built new dams against the floods of the Vistula and Nogat rivers, and that one should rather be concerned that more of them be brought into the country. "One can easily see where a lazy, drunken farmer or where an industrious, sober Mennonite lives." In order to avoid being excommunicated by the Catholic Church, Dzialinsky and those of a mind with him had to retract their remarks, but a majority against the Mennonites was not achieved, especially because of the negative attitude of the representatives from the major cities, and the issue concerning the Mennonites was quietly passed over in the minutes of the provincial diet. This one example shall stand for many. On one occasion, during a particularly stormy argument over the "Mennonite question" in the royal Polish Senate, a high nobleman became so agitated in his defense of the "Anabaptists" that he forced his way to the very throne of the king. But even on this occasion the hostile recommendations were not acted on, and the threats of expulsion were

transformed into protective documents ("Privileges"). In 1764 the West Prussian Mennonites sent their delegates, Cornelius Gerdsen and Cornelius Willms, to the Polish king Stanislaus August Poniatovsky and received from him a document, dated December 20, 1764, which confirmed all their old religious and residential privileges, namely the charters of privileges of 1650, 1660, 1694, 1699, 1732 and 1736. According to Reiswitz and Wadzeck, the content of all of these documents conveyed the message "that one must protect the Mennonites because they were a useful people; the ancestors of the kings had brought them out of the Netherlands in order to cultivate the marshlands."

b) *Under the German Hohenzollern.* That is how it had been under Polish rule. But it was to become more difficult for the Mennonites during the reign of the warlike Hohenzollern. Yet even here they knew how to maintain their essential beliefs for some time. For here too it was their benefit to the state, that is especially to the cities and large landowners, which time and again, in spite of military considerations and/or accusations of religious fanaticism, gained them their privileges. Thus, as indicated above, Swiss Anabaptists were allowed to settle in Prussian-Lithuania in 1711 under Frederick I. Strangely enough, that great warrier Frederick (II) the Great, was especially well-inclined toward the Mennonites of East Prussia. As is well-known, like William I of Orange, he was broadly and unbelievably tolerant for his time in regard to religious matters and demonstrated an equally fatherly concern for the cultural elevation of his territories. It was therefore not for nothing that "Old Fritz" was so popular with our Russian Mennonite immigrant fathers. Already during the first year (1740) of his reign he commanded, "that those Mennonites, who want to settle in Koenigsberg and other locations of East Prussia, should everywhere be accepted." He made especially sure that the Dutch Mennonites knew this. (Of these it must be said in recognition, that they were always ready to come to the aid of their persecuted brothers through the Dutch government, which was favorably inclined toward them, and whose good offices were used to petition the persecuting governments—Switzerland, the Palatinate—as well as directly with money and counsel). It was during Frederick II's reign as well, in 1764, that the fathers of our Gnadenfelder—32 families—found a welcome acceptance, with conspicuous privileges unheard of till then, in the mark of Brandenburg, the very heart of the Hohenzollern state, where they founded Brenkenhofswalde, etc. His father, Frederick I, had been less favorably disposed toward them, for he could not forgive them the fact that two Mennonite "tall fellows," who had been acquired for his favorite plaything, the "tall guard"—that is, had been coerced—had to be freed in accordance with the Mennonite privileges. Similar recruiting incidents occurred repeatedly; although they were always nullified as illegal, they nevertheless caused much fear,

qualms of conscience, and often severe and bloody abuse. Toward the end of the 18th century the question of military service was settled for all of the Hohenzollern-Prussian territories by imposing a considerable tribute on the Mennonites for the support of military academies. In order to stop the spread of this military exemption, the government finally forbade not only the acceptance of new members into the Mennonite congregations as well as all immigration, but also ordered that Mennonites could henceforth buy land only from other Mennonites and that all children of mixed marriages be brought up in the confession of the non-Mennonite partner.[29] The government of the morally weak and hypocritical Frederick William II (since 1786) demonstrated a particular ill-will toward the Mennonites, the consequence of which was the emigration, uneven, it is true, but continuing on into the present, to America, Russian-Poland and especially Russia (since 1788 and with interruptions into the '70s of the 19th century), to the extent that the Mennonites in West and East Prussia today number about ten thousand souls, less than in 1800. Conditions once again improved for the Prussian Mennonites under King Frederick William III who came under the influence of the Tsar Alexander I. Since the 70s of the 19th century all the German Mennonites owe military service, but in such a manner, that if they are descendants of all-Mennonite families, they may hold non-combative posts in the army: army medical service, secretaries, army service corps, etc.; at least this is the case for the majority, that is for all those living in the Prussian state. Nor were they accorded the privileges granted to them so lavishly in Russia anywhere in Germany, over an extended period of time. Even America (Canada and the United States) was much friendlier to them than Germany.

4. *Teachings and Church Life of the Prussian Mennonites*

§15 a) These have been brought to Russia in the form of the two generally known confessions, the "Frisian" and the "Flemish," to be found in the "Explanation" to the "Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith" of 1900/1902. Their constitution as well as church organization has been totally transplanted to Russia. An "elder," ordained by the laying on of hands,[30] who fulfills all the functions of a bishop, stands at the head of the congregation: he preaches, has the cure of souls, exercises discipline and leadership, baptizes, dispenses the Lord's Supper, and consecrates, i.e., commissions the elected elders, teachers and deacons. He is assisted by a larger or smaller group of "teachers" and "preachers," assistants to the elders, and one or more deacons or overseers of the poor in accordance with the need and potential of the congregation. The ministers (teachers), who, according to Flemish church practice, are commissioned only with a solemn handshake,

prayer, admonition, and benediction from the elder, as well as a handshake and benediction from all the other teachers, but receive no laying on of hands,[31] participate in all the congregational activities of the elder, preach, marry and bury, preside in the absence of the elder at his and the congregation's express charge, but do not conduct baptismal or communion services except in cases of necessity, and then only for that occasion and with special permission from the congregation. The deacon serves at baptismal and communion services, oversees the church property, the care of the poor and all other charitable activities of the congregation. All of these together constitute the "teaching service" (Lehrdienst), "church council" or even "church convocation," and "church system." The "brotherhood," however, is the final authority, the real sovereign law-making body, and is called according as need arises, usually by the elder or his representative, and consists of all the mature male members of the individual congregations under the leadership of the church council. By majority vote the "brotherhood" decides, in the final analysis, all important financial matters, the excommunication of erring and readmission of penitent members, matters of dogma and church governance, and the acceptance or rejection of the church council's resolutions or those adopted by a conference of the various church councils and representatives of the conference congregations. The brotherhood elects its elders, teachers and deacons (usually through secret ballot given to the appropriate preachers in the "preacher's room" or "Ohmstube"). The candidates are either recommended by the council or else the congregation votes without any previous slate of candidates. The elder—and the others nearly without exception—is invariably elected from the ranks of the preachers, who are essentially candidates for the position of elder and substitutes without full power.[32]

b) The "minister" ("teacher") of the "old" Mennonite Church congregations in Russia, by a general conference resolution of 1898, was, in principle, granted the right to perform all official functions at the desire of the congregation. In contrast, the M.B. Church, from the very beginning of its existence, ordained its "teachers" as well as deacons, and thus all the deacons as well as the ministers are enabled, in the case of need and by special appointment, to perform all official functions. The "elder" in the Mennonite Brethren Church, even though very influential and honored, is set off from the rest of the ministers only by the fact that he is the permanent presiding officer at all functions and has the power to ordain, while the other ministers perform these two functions only at the behest of the elder and the congregation. The differentiation between the "elder" and the "teachers" or the "ministers" in the M.B. Church is merely a practical matter with regard to church order: all ministers are co-elders,[33] while the elder is the presiding, that is, leading minister.

This arrangement, as well as the practice of ordination, is not a matter of faith, as some Protestants (Anglicans) would have us believe. In this way the ancient Anabaptist-evangelical practice has been reinstituted by us. The "Frisian" confession of faith makes no distinction between "elder" and "teacher," and in the article dealing with deacons Romans 12:7-9 is quoted verbatim, thereby establishing that deacons play a role in the teaching function of the church. The Gnadenfeld and Alexanderwohl congregations of Russia still ordain the ministers (assistants to the elders) through the laying on of hands according to the original "old Flemish" (or Ukowallian) rite. (It is also noteworthy that these congregations also consecrate the wives of the ministers at their ordination by the laying on of hands.)

c) In the old days, as today, in the case of deplorable incidents concerning the person of the elder, one or more elders from other conference churches were consulted; but even if the elder was deposed, the local congregation made the final decision. The fundamental assumption of this system is that the leader of the congregation should be the wisest, most pious, most influential, honorable and trustworthy, fatherly older brother, leader and overseer,[34] but not an autocratic, lordly father. A gathering of such fatherly brothers constitutes the leadership of the individual congregation or also of the conference as such. The rest of the mature members of the church are not, however, regarded as unqualified, but as equally qualified brothers, and therefore any final decision can only be reached by the whole congregation, or even by the majority, after listening to the opinions, the counsel, advice, and admonitions of the leader or the church council. The entire history of the Mennonites, however, indicates that the majority of the congregation usually agrees with the elder; the overriding of the views of the elder by the majority of the congregation, after a fundamental statement of his views and desires, is the exception. Indeed, the elder is usually too cautious and too well acquainted with the views of the congregation, and the congregation usually regards the elder with too much trust and respect, for the two to disagree very often.[35] In the case of utterly incompatible positions with regard to important issues between two factions in the congregation, a schism, separation or withdrawal, usually occurs, often enough to the detriment of both parties, but sometimes to the benefit of the whole, as has happened to us and many larger church bodies. That is how it was and will remain in this imperfect world until the Lord Himself "will create something new" and "shepherd His flock Himself."

d) The "Frisian" and "Flemish" factions in Prussia, also at one time the product of the presumed impossibility of making concessions on either side (cf. "Dutch Mennonites"), were originally distinguished from one another by a greater or lesser degree of severity in execution of

church discipline. In the matter of shunning of excommunicated members, the Flemish, as we already know of Menno, went so far as to forbid all family and matrimonial intercourse. In the case of mixed marriages, they usually excluded the member forever. That is why they were called "the fine ones," i.e., the "strict ones," and the Frisians "the coarse ones," i.e., the less strict. The Flemish were generally regarded as more orthodox. That did not stop them, however, from becoming more worldly than the Frisians, who were considered more liberal. That is the distinct impression generally created by those Frisian and Flemish congregations that came to Russia. Thus the Flemish brought with them a confessional rigidity and exclusivity combined with a minimum of piety and morality, while the Frisians acted in a more brotherly fashion to believers in other denominations, demonstrated a more genuine piety and a greater tendency to cultural and church improvement. (The "old Flemish"—the Gnadenfelder, Alexanderwohler and Waldheimer—who constitute a much smaller group, are to be distinguished from the "Frisians" and the "Flemish.")

e) By the turn of the eighteenth century, however, after a long period of rigid separation, the attitude of these two groups toward each other changed more toward a mutual recognition of each other.[36] In the region around Danzig the two groups even shared a common elder, though their ecclesiastical practices differed.

f) Every congregation, together with its council, constituted an absolutely autonomous religious community.[37] From time to time the various councils and other representatives of the individual congregations came together for mutual consultation. But such resolutions are merely recommendations to the various congregations, whose acceptance or rejection is strictly dependent upon the wishes of the individual brotherhoods of each congregation. In most instances, however, acceptance of such resolutions is the order of the day. The council of church leaders[38] of Molotschna, South Russia, was an innovation only to the extent that it attempted, in the early years, to "rule," i.e., attempted to make its resolutions into decrees and binding upon the individual congregations. As has already been mentioned, the first historically discernible gathering of the representatives of the Prussian Mennonite congregations took place in 1586. The decisive votes in these conferences were retained by the elders; the teachers and others were merely consultative members of the conference.

g) According to an official document of the Prussian government, the ministers received their training or preparation "in the bosom of the congregation." (Cf. further the matters related to David von Riesen). That meant that the minister was educated only to the extent he had acquired the general and theological knowledge available by listening to

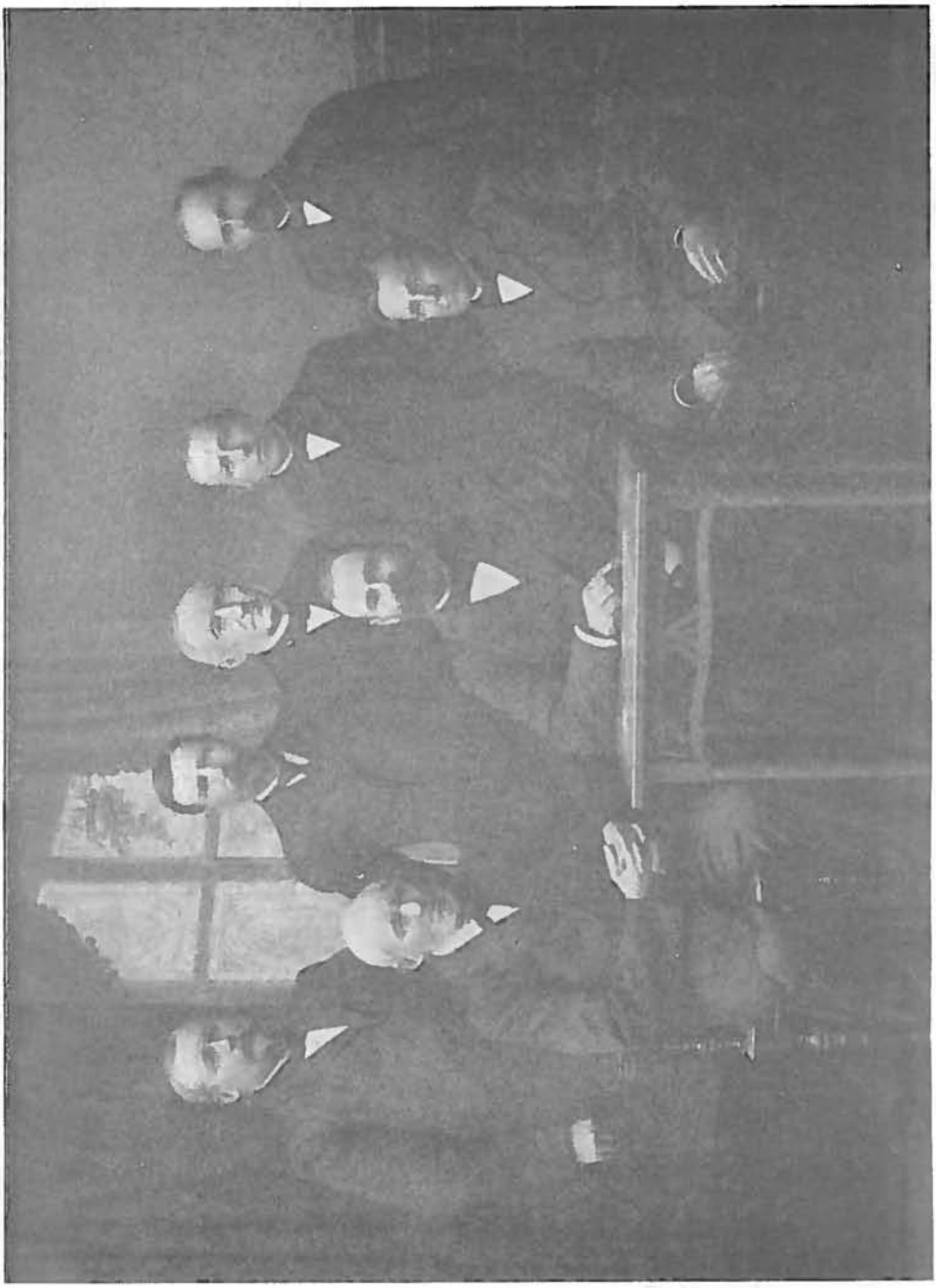
the sermons of his leaders, by reading, and other private studies he may have pursued without any kind of general framework.[39] At times this could be a solid general and theological training, more often, however, it was little enough and inadequate for his high calling. Indeed, in later years he was too often a blind leader of the blind, void of any apparent education or theological knowledge as well as any spiritual life emanating from God. That which came to Russia was a product of Prussian Mennonitism.

h) Undoubtedly there were always some competent and spiritual men in the Prussian congregations. Especially outstanding among the spiritual leaders of our parent congregations in Prussia, as they appear to us in our Russian historical recollections, was Elder Cornelius Warkentin of Rosenort in the vicinity of Elbing. (Cf. below *#63*). He organized the affairs of the church for the Chortitza Mennonites in 1794. Warkentin was an impressive and attractive personality. He wrote, spoke, officiated, and acted before high and low alike as a man of splendid general and theological training. Not only his fellow believers, but also Catholic and Lutheran clergymen, imperial Russian colonial officials, governors and important personalities alike treated him with reverential love. His sojourn in the Chortitza colonies was one uninterrupted Pentecostal celebration for those orphaned settlers, his departure—a heart-rending grief. His journey through Russia was like the grand processional of a foreign but co-religionist bishop among Mennonites, Lutherans, Catholics and Greek Orthodox alike. The Countess Rumianzev, a favorite of Empress Catherine the Great, invited him as her equal to her castle for a cup of coffee after she had visited him, and Warkentin accepted with dignity and humility, "like one of God's nobility," this and every other honor bestowed upon him. The governor as well as the mayor of Riga invited him to festive dinners with the first families of the city and into the intimacy of their family circles. Equal honor was accorded him by the presence in his private Riga church services of persons of all confessions and walks of life. Seven years after these events, the blessed Tsar Alexander I presented him with a large gold medal struck in his honor, with the Tsar's name and likeness on one side and Warkentin's name on the other "for his excellent church organization in the Mennonite congregations," a medal presented to him together with a highly flattering document making him an imperial dignitary. Warkentin's religious character appears from the notes in his diary as that of a truly believing Christian; in church matters he appears extremely tolerant. He hopes for a happy reunion in eternity with a Catholic priest. (That was the period of the tolerant, evangelically inclined Catholic pastors and bishops.)

i) Naturally, Cornelius Warkentin was one of the better exceptions, but certainly not the only one among his fellow workers.[40] The worse



Ladekopp Church Leaders in West Prussia, 1910. Back row: J. Wiens; A. Jansson; (d.H. Friesen, Ladekopp); J. Penner; J. Schroeder; E. Claassen, B. Andres; front row: J. Dyck; C. Jansson; Elder J. Neufeld; P. Penner.



Ohlofferfelde Church Leaders, 1910. Back row: P. Froese; J. Heidebrecht; (d.Elder J. Penner, Platenhof); H. Friesen; H. Mekelburger; front row: D. Mekelburger; Elder C. Neufeld; J. Quiring.

exceptions were drawn from the ranks of those intellectual and spiritual incompetents among the "Ohms" of our earlier Russian Mennonite congregations, who read their poorly-spelled and ill-understood sermons, borrowed and copied from others, inserting so many errors in the process as to make them virtually incoherent.[41] Because of this, and to a certain extent because of their own awareness of the heavy responsibility which their position placed on them and their own total incompetence to meet these responsibilites, they often broke out in sighs and outright weeping, inducing the same in their audience. As a result, the latter believed themselves to have been moved and uplifted! And take the "zealot" who, in order to care for the souls and improve church discipline, reached for very tangible aids! We possess as good historical evidence[42] for the latter as for the life of Cornelius Warkentin. Warkentin, as well as the sad cases in the early years of our sojourn in Russia, portrayed above, were offspring of the Prussian Mennonite brotherhood. The mean is easily found. But it must be said here as well, on the basis of our (not very extensive) evidence, personal observations, and the oral communication of eye witnesses in the Prussian rural congregations even of today, that, aside from these very inadequately prepared spiritual workers, there was no lack of worthy followers of Cornelius Warkentin. This is proven, among other things, by the 1895 edition of the new "Confession of Faith," a combination of the old Frisian and Flemish confessions.

k) The rural Prussian Mennonite congregations of the last 200 years could be characterized as religiously orthodox, though lacking in inner spiritual warmth (cf. above, "Dutch Mennonites," Rationalism). The religious disparity between the clergy and the rank and file membership was more apparent here than among the contemporary Russian Mennonite Church: in the clergy nearly universally, at least outwardly, an honorable Christian life and relatively sound knowledge, amongst the members extraordinarily superficial liberality and conformity with the world in matters relating to thought, speech and lifestyle (always, of course, with exceptions). Little remained of Menno's original congregational ideals in the life of most congregations except for teachings and constitution. A certain intellectual and spiritual inflexibility and barren coldness seem also to have been characteristic of these rural congregations.[43] (The less numerous Swiss and South German Mennonite congregations appear to have been much warmer and more pious.) This inflexibility is perhaps best portrayed by the uninterrupted emigration of their most energetic and flexible (as well as, simultaneously, of the most unstable) elements. Nevertheless, and in spite of all the bad times, the Prussian Mennonite congregations have managed to retain, with remarkable energy, the essential teachings and constitutions of our heritage in much better and purer form than Holland and many German

urban congregations. (Wichern presents a much more favorable picture of a Prussian Mennonite congregation than the one we have presented on the basis of more broadly based evidence. Cf. further VI, 5).

l) We cannot avoid briefly recounting an episode from the congregational life of the Prussian Mennonite brotherhood here which clearly demonstrates with what unity, decisiveness, and dignity the church leaders could act when the occasion arose. In 1815, D. von Riesen, a member of the Elbing-Ellerwalde congregation, became a Prussian soldier, freely and "out of a sense of patriotism," as he declared. He soon gave up the army, and, without confessing any wrong, wanted again to become a member of the congregation which had excommunicated him because of his uncoerced breach of faith and unrepentant attitude. It refused to readmit him. Eventually the case came before the combined leadership of the East and West Prussian Mennonite congregations, which, because of their agreement with the decision of the Elbing-Ellerwalde congregations, were now taken to court by D. von Riesen. Finally, the Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs threatened all the elders, teachers and deacons with the most severe punishment as political and civil criminals. Not one of them lost his courage, however. Finally, the criminal branch of the Cameral Court, acting as the court of last resort, stated that, viewed from the point of view of the church law of his congregation, D. von Riesen had no grounds for his accusation and declared the accused leaders of the Mennonite congregations "as not liable to punishment" (Berlin, January 24, 1818). No matter how the individual Christian may view the question of nonresistance, the steadfastness of these Mennonite preachers deserves praise from everyone. Would that our Mennonite leadership in Russia had always acted as steadfastly and in as unified a manner on the basis of purely religious principles! Certainly, their action was the positive result of an education stretching over the centuries and that "preparation for the ministry in the bosom of the church," something that is respectfully noted in the documents of the Prussian government that dealt with this incident. (Cf. Reiswitz and Wadzeck.)

The D. von Riesen incident falls between the years 1815-1818, when the greatest number of emigrants had already left for Russia.

5. *Appendix I*

A West-Prussian Mennonite congregation in the years 1778-1795. (Paraphased from "W" in *Monatsblaetter aus Bethel College.* Newton, Kansas. January, February, and March 1904.)

a) The memoirs of Elder Gerhard Wiebe of the Elbing-Ellerwalde congregation, in which the D. von Riesen episode took place about 25

years later, present us with an interesting insight into the congregational conditions of our West Prussian fathers during the last decade of the 18th century. Wiebe's memoirs span the years 1778 to 1795, during which time he was the elder of the congregation. According to our source, he was the author of a widely read confession of faith consisting of some 20 articles, probably the "Flemish" confession. He presents the following data, drawn from the original documents, concerning the existence of his congregation. In 1585 Hans von Koeln and Jost von Kampen are named as Mennonite inhabitants of Elbing. In 1641 a von Kampen received permission from the city to operate a small retail silk goods shop; many Mennonites became citizens. In 1660 the Mennonites were granted permission to build a church and organize a regular congregation. The church was small, however, since it did not have its own elder and had to be served by one from the lowlands (Danzig?) until 1726, when it received one from its own midst. The honorable Wiebe was ordained in 1778 by the honorable C. Regier of Heubuden [probably the one who died in Chortitza, cf. X, Appendix: Cornelius Warkentin]. The rural and urban brothers made up the congregations. In 1783 the congregation built a second church in the country: in the "Ellerwalde" [Erlenwald]. The congregation became large: in 1788 there were 468 rural and 156 urban communicants. Under Elder Wiebe the baptismal instruction consisted in a short study of the catechism. The young people are "presented" for acceptance in the congregation by two witnesses [as happens in most of the congregations of our Russian Mennonite brotherhood, and because a "testimonial" is required from brothers and sisters of every person requesting admission to the Mennonite Church. The old post-apostolic church proceeded in a similar manner in the case of catechumen—baptismal candidates]. The confession of faith is read aloud before holy baptism [in the Mennonite Church here in Russia one speaks of "reading the articles aloud"]; the baptismal act itself is carried out on the day of Pentecost. When the weather is good guests come to witness the baptismal ceremony from the nearby sister-congregation of Rosenort. Elder Wiebe notes the name of every person baptized and appends a good wish for the baptizands at the end of each year's group in the church register. What a beautiful custom! At one point he notes that a baptismal candidate was kept back from baptism because of ignorance concerning religious matters and a worldly life, and admonished to mend his ways. Of interest in regard to church matters is the following incident: A Mrs. Hamm, nee Boldt, a Lutheran, married a member of a Mennonite congregation. Her husband, Hamm, was immediately excommunicated, but very soon desired with all his heart to be readmitted, along with his wife. His wife, however, had to be granted permission from the government to do so. This document states: "After I informed the honorable royal West Prussian government of the desire of Anna

Christina, nee Boldt, now Mrs. Hamm, to leave our church and join that of the Flemish congregation of the Mennonites and requested its decision in this matter, it allowed said Mrs. Hamm to transfer to the Mennonite faith under the date of March 15 of this year, and therefore the respective teacher of the Flemish congregation, to which she will direct her request in this regard, can accept her without let or hindrance and without the least fear of reprisals from the secular authorities. In testimony of this I have personally signed this document and sealed it with the seal of the church. Done at Neuteich on March 31, 1790. Bobrick." [This transfer to the Mennonite congregation was allowed as an exception to the general rule.] Elder Dirk Thiessen of the Ladekopp congregation, however, hesitated to accept the couple; "for shallow reasons," as Elder Wiebe remarks, he had no sympathy for the matter until Wiebe himself accepted them into the Elbing-Ellerwalde congregation.[44] The teaching arm of the congregation is elected, sometimes the lot is even cast between two or three candidates. The sermons are read. Sometimes they are repeated [probably every year as we have come to know it]. Wiebe notes with care who has preached and on what topic as well as the text and introduction to the sermon. Two sermons were given in every service according to the Dutch custom. The first sermon was considered to be the introduction. The topics and introductions of the sermons point to the fact that in their form they were imitations of the sermons of educated theologians. One sermon, for example, has the following text: topic and introduction: Isaiah 61:1-6: "The prophecy concerning Jesus, the light of the world, and kingdom of grace among Jews and Gentiles. 1. An encouragement faithfully to pursue this kingdom, and 2. Concerning its establishment among Jews and Gentiles." The sermons of Wiebe appear to have been carefuly constructed. [The majority, even of the educated and devout ministers of that time, read their sermons]. As an example of a severe case, Elder Wiebe relates how one of their teachers (ministers) moved to the Heubuden congregation and how that congregation very hesitatingly decided to dismiss him. Considerable space in the notes is devoted to disciplinary cases. The leadership was particularly concerned about dancing, the playing of cards, and drunkenness. One engaged couple was taken to task for having danced in a garden [probably at an inn]. With tears in their eyes they promised not to do it again. Another brother and his wife have built a bowling alley in the city where music and dancing take place: they are excommunicated because they cannot justify their action. Other instances of severe quarrels leading to fights occur. School teacher Kr. is called before the ministers because of drunkenness and "extreme zeal" in the classroom. "We confronted him with his error and he promised to improve." One man has to come before the leadership because his wife has beaten their maid, a member of the

congregation. The man admits that his wife reaches "the end of her rope" rather quickly, on the other hand, however, the maid is not very obedient; yet such conduct shall not be repeated in the future. The girl, however, did not want to return to the family. Blood brothers not only quarreled but also fought over the division of inherited furniture. Other brothers do not keep their word in money matters and are therefore refused access to the communion table. Unhappy marriages create problems: one wife runs away from her husband and does not want to return to him. With much patience and effort the ministers are able to reconcile the couple. Another wife tells the leadership that she was matched with her husband. After much effort even this case is resolved. A young sister has become engaged to a Lutheran organist. After serious consideration her Mennonite conscience is sensitized; she turns to the leadership for counsel. At first she is refused access to the communion table; after she has broken the relationship and begged earnestly to be readmitted she is again accorded full membership. Another brother is summarily excommunicated because he has married a sister of the Thiensdorf [Frisian] congregation! Soon his wife dies, now he wants to marry within the circle of his old congregation; "upon confession of guilt [!] and request for forgiveness" he is reinstated. An instance from another congregation is recorded where a man married his deceased wife's sister, is excommunicated, but then finally reinstated "through a vote of the brethren." This occasioned the calling of a conference of the elders of Danzig, Elbing, Heubuden, and Grosswerder on June 14, 1781. A resolution is passed that all marriages not allowed in Leviticus, chapters 18 and 20, are to be punished with perpetual excommunication [!]. Instances of severe immorality also dishonor the congregation and fill the hearts of the devout with anxious worries. The secular life: dancing, bowling, the drinking of hard liquor etc., lead to special meetings of the elders and teachers with the hope of curtailing such practices. [Nothing new under the sun!] We notice, however, that the leadership is alert to its duties [even though one may perhaps observe that they are guilty of too much "congregational order" and not enough spiritual power]. Nonetheless, the spiritual offices of the church are held in high regard. [As a whole, one had sunk quite low, though there were still certainly many "who had not sullied their clothes," and who now most assuredly "walk with Christ in white robes," Revelation 3:4. It is from these that we have received our fundamental teachings and our constitution.]

b) If the foregoing is highly instructive with regard to Wiebe's own and his closest sister congregation's life, the following passage taken from the same source (*Monatsblaetter* 1904, #4) is, if anything, still more gripping because of the insights it affords us into the relationship of these congregations to their more distant sister congregations, as well as presenting us with some highly important historical clarifications of

questions which have concerned us for some ten years, such as whether or not the settlements of Gnadenfeld and Alexanderwohl in Russia or America respectively are "old-Frisian" or "old-Flemish," "Ukowallian," a question which is answered here on the basis of the latest evidence. Compare IX. 9.ff. We copy the passage verbatim. "The notes of Elder Wiebe's diary also present the relationships of one congregation to another, as well as the way in which the author maintained brotherly relationships with distant fellow-believers in a most engaging manner. At first the congregations of the Flemish persuasion maintained a close relationship with one another. Their elders and ministers discharge common concerns at conferences, dispatch delegates to Berlin and arrange support for those who have suffered injury through broken dykes and floods. In 1786 Wiebe journeyed to Koenigsberg to preside at the communion service because Elder Kroecker had become quite old. Eighty-four people were present at the celebration. A few days after his return home he received word of Kroecker's passing. Just before his death, Kroecker had movingly encouraged his co-workers to adhere to the faith of their fathers and care faithfully for his flock. . . . Questions of interest to Mennonites and other [confessional] groups give the congregation cause for concern. Thus, in 1784, a Protestant merchant [of Danzig] was to marry a Mennonite girl. She consented but did not want to lose her membership in the church. Her fiance and others, the mayor included, went to great lengths to persuade Elder Epp to be more tolerant. Epp and the congregation, however, stuck to their old [Flemish] practice and, as a consequence, the sister transfered to the Frisian congregation which allowed such an arrangement. Wiebe reported of a bitter quarrel in the very bosom of this [Frisian] congregation. A minister named Siebert declared it to be unjust to rebaptize those who wanted to join the Mennonite church and had already been baptized as children. Although he found some support for his views in his own congregation, the elders of the Ohrlofferfelde and Nichefsky congregations in the vicinity of Thorn declared themselves to be in opposition, and thus the case came before the government in Berlin. [Then already this evil was present! It is the reverse of the D. von Riesen incident.] The government decreed that Siebert's congregation could divide, that the group which was willing to pay the highest price could retain the building, but that for the rest everyone was to remain undisturbed in his group. On September 11, 1785, a Frisian minister, v. Dueren, from Danzig, preached in Ellerwalde. His sermon is declared to have been very edifying 'and was therefore listened to with great pleasure.' He also spoke in Heubuden,—the first time, Wiebe declares, that a minister of the Frisian persuasion had preached to them [!]. Another interesting note is related regarding the old Flemish or Groningen[45] congregation to the south of Kulm near Przechovka [Prussian Psbechovka] [also known as 'Ukowallians' after

Uko Wall, their most important elder in the early years],—whose elder Benjamin Wedel together with his co-worker Jacob Wedel [cf. IX. Gnadenfeld, confession of faith] came to their northern brethren in 1784 with the request that they help them become free of two recruiting officers putting them under pressure. A gathering took place in Rosenort and they were given the advice to go directly to the king with their complaint [still the tolerant Frederick II]. Wiebe thereupon petitioned the king. Three years later he paid a visit to Elder Cornelius Regehr [Regier!] of Heubuden and the congregation of that region. An elder of the Neumark congregation, named Janzen [Peter 'Janz' of the 'Brenkenhofswalde-Franztal' congregation, an outgrowth of the Przechovka congregation; cf. IX. 9], met him there and they experienced a blessed time together. In 1794 the diary notes the Elder Jacob Wedel of Przechovka had also died. This congregation formed the basis [of the Gnadenfeld and Alexanderwohl congregation—Molotschna, Russia, and] of the current Alexanderwohl congregation of Kansas [USA] residing just north of Newton. Wiebe also maintained strong connections with the Hutterites [cf. above III. Jakob Hutter] of Vyschinka in Western Russia. In 1780 a certain Matthias Hoffer came to West Prussia from that region. Hoffer had been imprisoned because of his faith, spending sixteen years in a Carinthia [southern Austria] jail, from which he had then escaped to Russia where he had been a member of a communal farm for eight years. After a while, however, he became dissatisfied with his lot and so moved to Prussia. Three years later Joseph Mueller, a minister, and a member of his congregation came to visit the Prussian congregation; the former even preached, and that very edifyingly, in their churches. 'In other respects, however, he insisted energetically on their community of goods.' He told them that many of their members in Hungary had gone over to the Roman Catholic Church, because of which some of them still had qualms of conscience. The Prussian brethren gave them a small wagon, some spending money and let them move on. Later others followed who wanted to go to Hungary in order to help their fellow-believers in hiding to escape. Meanwhile, Wiebe remained in letter contact with the Hutterites, who complained when they failed to receive a letter from him for some time. They informed him about the death of their Elder Joseph Mueller who died at the ripe old age of 80 in 1792. They also wrote him how overjoyed they were at the visit of Elder Warkentin on his return journey from Chortitza in 1794 and how they were concerned to make his stay a pleasant one. [See X.] Wiebe was also in letter contact with the South German brethren,—for example with Lorenz Friedenreich in Neuwied [on the Rhine] and Peter Weber of the Palatinate. He informed these of the conditions in the Prussian congregations, of dispatching Elder [Cornelius] Regehr ['Regier,' of the Heubuden congregation] and Minister [Cornelius] Warkentin [of the Rosenort congregation] to

Chortitza [upon the urgent requests of those from Chortitza these two voluntarily offered—according to Minister D. H. Epp,—to go there, where Regier died, cf. VIII. and X.], and of the plight of the Hutterian brethren. Then he asked concerning the congregations on the Rhine. Thereupon he received the response that French troops had ravished the region, taken nearly everything except the clothes on their backs, indeed stripped some people of their shoes and clothing and whipped them in order to discover where they had hidden their treasures. 'They took, it says, the locks from the doors and tore the lead from the windows, but where is contrition and conversion? Pride, the pursuit of sensual pleasures, and open impiety are everyday occurrences.' Wiebe proves himself to be a pillar of his congregation and the wider fellowship. His broad and loving vision, which he carried in a prayerful heart, encompassed both local and distant concerns. In July of 1795 his notes come to an end. When one reads these notes one cannot help but sense the warmth of upright piety, and one feels little justification to place himself beside one so worthy. Thus far according to Wiebe. [Elder Wiebe's episcopal stature is no less sympathetic or commanding of respect than that of C. Warkentin, his contemporary and colleague. We are deeply grateful to the highly regarded brother Wiebe, the author, for publishing this passage and we are in his debt for the use of it.]

Appendix 2

§17 The following piece, which relates to the emigration of the Mennonites, throws interesting sidelights on the relationships between the Flemish and Frisians toward the end of the 18th century (taken from Rev. D. H. Epp's *Chortitza Mennoniten*[46] [The Chortitza Mennonites]. Our orthography.).

a) "Amsterdam, May 15, 1788. The Peace and Grace of our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord be with the beloved elder and the other honorable co-workers of the Mennonite Church outside[47] Danzig! Amen. Dear friends and brothers! We have been accorded the honor of being able to see and speak with the most noble Lord von Trappe[48] in our city, in our homes, and in our church. He has informed us that a certain number of Mennonites, from our [Flemish] congregation as well as from others, have left for Kherson[49] upon the friendly entreaty of her royal Russian Majesty, in order, if it please the lord, that they may be freed from their oppressive conditions. This most noble lord further informed us that her royal Russian Majesty not only promised them full freedom of religious worship, but also wants to build them a church; however, her royal Russian Majesty desires that the various Mennonite Churches be united in one church and that Mennonites might be at liberty to intermarry.

b) "Because his most noble lordship has been given to understand

that you still exercise the ban over those who marry outside the congregation, he has asked us to petition you if it were not possible to allow those friends, who wish to move to Kherson, to intermarry with one another without being banned or excluded from the congregation. We have neither been able nor have we wished to deny his most noble lordship, the lord von Trappe, this request, all the more so because for some time now we have ourselves been in the process of change since we no longer feel at liberty to exclude from the congregation those who marry outside it.

c) "In truth, brethren, if we take God's infallible Word to counsel we will quickly become aware that exercising the punishment of the ban on those who choose a marriage partner outside the congregation is much too severe. For such a person, even though he has manifested this weakness [?], can probably be and remain a good Christian in spite of this, for all of us fail daily in many things. Should one therefore exclude such a person from the visible church and withhold the seal of the covenant from him as long as he or she lives? No! For our part, because we daily experience and become aware of how unfathomably great is God's love to all of mankind, we dare no longer presume to deal so coldly and unfeelingly with our brother.

d) "That the now dead Menno Simons regarded this practice as good in his day is another matter entirely, for at that time everything [?] was Catholic [except for the Anabaptists]. Now, however, the difference is very great [between then and now]. And we regard it as absolutely permissible for true Mennonites, who are both grounded in the same teaching, to marry one another.

e) "We beg you, therefore, dear brethren, that you will consider this matter with one another in the fear of God. It would give us a great deal of pleasure were we to hear in the near future that this matter had been left to the discretion of the brethren and sisters. Finally, we remain, with friendly best wishes that God may shed his blessing upon you personally and your congregation, respectfully your friends and brothers in Christ.

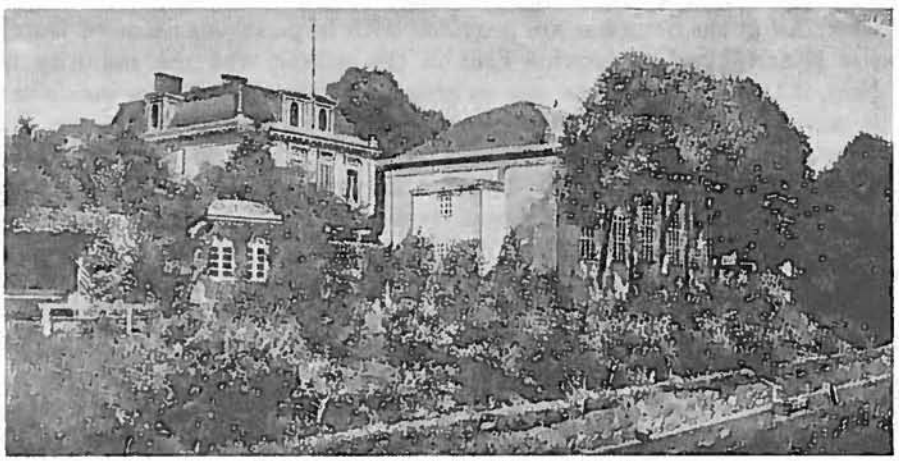
The leaders and co-workers of the *Oude Vlaamsche Doopsgezinde Gemeente* in Amsterdam. Signed by all the co-workers of the Word and leaders of the above-named congregation, one of whom signs his name as J. S. Seep." [Is this not a typographical error?—should it not be "Epp"?]

Appendix 3

§18 We find the churches and church services of the Prussian Mennonite congregations described by Rev. J. Mannhardt of Danzig, the publisher of the *Mennonitische Blaetter*, M. 4, 1862. The architecture of the church



Jakob Mannhardt, minister of the Mennonite Church, Danzig, 1836-1885. Founder of the *Mennonitische Blaetter*.



Mennonite Church and Manse, Danzig.

building and structure of the church services described here are more than likely older than two hundred years since virtually no changes in formal matters have taken place in these congregations. [We paraphrase freely.]

a) Our rural church buildings are simple, oblong four-cornered structures, neither of great height nor special beauty, some smaller and some larger depending on the size of the congregation, seating from three hundred to a thousand souls. Like other rural structures, they are built entirely of wood, though most often fitted with a tile roof. [Try to recall our old (earlier) "wooden" church in Petershagen, Molotschna.] Until a few years ago (before 1862) all of these buildings remained unpainted [we did not learn to know such "bland" buildings in Russia]; it is only in recent years that some congregations, while making necessary repairs in the churches, have brightened the inside of the churches with a coat of paint. All of the churches are provided with large stoves made of Dutch tiles [Kachelofen] to provide heat in the winter, and the majority of them, if I am not mistaken, are so arranged that a part of the inside can be sealed off in the winter months by a wooden partition [in the Molotschna, Russia, by an oilcloth] in order to heat up the room more quickly. The pulpit is usually raised a few steps and placed midway on one of the long sides [more recently the pulpit is set against the short wall in Russia]; on both sides of the pulpit and a few steps lower are the chairs for the deacons and ministers. The song leaders [Vorsaenger] also have their special, somewhat elevated seats. A choir is situated opposite the pulpit as well as against the short wall of the church. It is here that the male members of the congregation take their seats while the female members sit on the lower level. [Until a few years ago these conditions obtained in all Russian Mennonite churches, and still do in most of those of South Russia.] One finds two rooms, either as special additions or built into the original structure, in every church: the one reserved for the first entry into the church by the women, the other for the gathering of the church leaders [the "Ohmsstuebchen"; exactly as in South Russia]. In front of the church are spacious yards where the wagons can be parked, with the necessary arrangements for tying up the horses. [The same is true of South Russia.] Likewise most congregations have their own graveyard next to the church. The urban Mennonite churches differentiate themselves from the rural churches in a few things. They have organs [which were then absent in the rural churches but are now to be found nearly everywhere].

b) Let us now turn to our church services. In all of our churches there is only one service on Sundays and holidays.[50] In all the rural congregations the preparatory church service for the communion service takes place a week before, while the thanksgiving sermon takes place a week later. Only in Danzig does the preparatory service take place the

afternoon before, and the thanksgiving sermon the same afternoon as the communion service. [The same is still true of the Mennonite Church of Russia.]

c) In the rural congregations the church service begins between 9 and 10 a.m. Usually three songs are sung at the beginning during which the congregation, whose members often live miles away and have to traverse difficult roads, gather. The current song leader [Vorsaenger] determines the choice of songs, announces, and intones the number. Each congregation has a number of these song leaders who are chosen from its midst and who serve in sequence. At the close of the third song, often the well-known: "Jesus Christ, we are here" [or: "Dearest Jesus, we are here"], or sometimes before if the elder deems it appropriate, he, together with the ministers and deacons, enter the church from their room and greet the congregation upon entry with the words: "Peace be with you!" Having arrived at their places, they kneel down for prayer, the one delivering the prayer kneeling before the chair closest to the pulpit. After they stand up and the singing ends the sermon begins. The Biblical selections of the Lutheran Church are very often used as the text, most often the Gospels; the epistle of the Sunday is also often discussed in the introduction. However, this is not a hard and fast rule, and the choice of text is left to the speaker. Between the introduction and the reading of the text, the minister summons the congregation to a silent prayer on its knees; a similar prayer is performed after the congregational or church prayer [our earlier Russian Mennonite "Thanksgiving": a beautiful compilation of Psalms, verses of songs, and petitions, etc.] and the Lord's Prayer. The benediction is spoken at the conclusion and the service closed with a few verses. In many churches the benediction is spoken only after the last verse has been sung by the departing congregation. The sermon rotates in a regular sequence between the elder and the rest of the ministers of the church. . . . The services in the urban congregations are similar.

Appendix 3b

Conference activities, Home and Foreign Missions of the Mennonites in Germany. According to Rev. H. G. Mannhardt's *Jahrbuch* (Yearbook), etc. of 1888, among others: §18(2)

a) ". . . In many congregations one finds . . . the hospital or poor house next to the church, in which the old, the frail and those church members unable to earn a living, find a home and are cared for. . . . Nevertheless, the deacons or leaders are everywhere . . . installed to provide for the care of the poor in the congregation according to definite principles. Where it is deemed necessary, deaconesses are employed . . . in the larger congregations, and it is well-known that Pastor Fliedner

became acquainted with this arrangement in the Mennonite congregation of the Netherlands before he founded his deaconesses' home in Kaiserswert. And furthermore, since home missions were being actively pursued in all the evangelical circles, the Mennonites everywhere participated in these activities, nor did they limit themselves to the confines of their own congregations (cf. Wichern—"Mennonites"). . . . Incidentally, many of the members of our German congregations also belong to the Gustav Adolphus organization.

b) "Of particular importance in the area of home missions in our congregations was the itinerant ministry. Just as each individual congregation has the responsibility to care for each of its members, so the total brotherhood has a responsibility to those members who are far removed and without continual contact with a congregation. To serve these members various congregational groups arranged for an 'itinerant ministry,' sometimes choosing and supporting a travelling minister financially, who has the duty to visit the smaller congregations and isolated families, or sometimes commissioning the ministers of the established congregations to serve in this capacity by turns. . . . Aside from this, there exists a kind of voluntary travelling ministry [also called 'guest ministry'] with us in Germany, as well as among our brethren in other lands, in that elders or ministers now and then pay visits to other congregations in order to preach there and get to know the brethren better or renew old acquaintances. Such visits were cultivated by the West Prussian congregations; in Russia [since the immigration], and more recently in America, they also frequently take place. At times someone may even make such a trip beyond the borders of his own country. . . . Thus now and then someone from West Prussia will travel to Russia and vice versa. . . ."

c) Regarding Mennonite foreign missions see *#300ff.* At present the former missionary Nikolai Wiebe serves the West Prussian congregations as "Missionary elder" (*#305*) in order to awaken interest in missions and serve the diaspora.

d) Conferences and Associations. The present West Prussian congregations constitute [according to the 1888 *Jahrbuch*] a free association for the purpose of holding annual conferences which are regularly attended by nearly all the congregations. . . . The Mennonite congregations of the Palatinate and Rheinhessen already formed such an association some time ago, as has the "Badisch-Wuerttembergisch-Bayrischer-Gemeinde-Verband," and both groups meet together in an annual conference of the South German Mennonite Churches.

Of great importance is the 25 year-old "Vereinigung der Mennoniten Gemeinden im Deutschen Reich." The above-named *Jahrbuch* states: "On the 29th of April, 1884, a small and insignificant entity came quietly

into being in the capital city of the German Empire . . . the 'Vereinigung der Mennoniten Gemeinden im Deutschen Reich'. . . . In an essay in the *Mennonitische Blaetter*, 'The necessary goals of the Association of German Mennonites,' it states: 'All of the various goals of the Association should be united under the following main goals: 1) The preservation and proclamation of the Gospel in our congregations; 2) The revival and strengthening of the Christian and Mennonite sense of community through the promotion of literary publications.' We can name three great accomplishments of this Association: a) All the German congregations without exception stand in a closer or looser association with it and thus also with one another, something that seemed impossible 25 years ago; b) regular church services now take place—in some instances churches have even been established—in many cities where Mennonites formerly lived alone and without care: in Berlin, Munich, Regensburg, Hannover, etc.; c) the congregation in Galicia, which was on the verge of disintegration, has been revitalized and now has an appointed, theologically trained, warm-hearted and energetic minister (elder) in the person of Br. Heinrich Pauls, who was ordained by the last minister and elder, Klein, who died recently at a ripe old age, and the above-mentioned missionary Nikolai Wiebe."

e) Periodicals: *Mennonitische Blaetter, Gemeindeblatt* and *Christlicher Gemeinde Kalender.*

Appendix 4

§19 The church services in Prussia of 50, 100, or 200 years ago were portrayed in Appendix 3; that is how they came to Russia. "But we have continually said to ourselves: this or that, in its time, was an 'innovation' as a consequence of the growing indifference and spiritual impoverishment; thus and only thus could a missionary church of martyrs impossibly have been built up; what was it like in the beginning?" For many years we could find no information in the available sources regarding the large Flemish and Frisian congregations which constituted the majority of the Mennonites. The "Old Flemish" congregation in Brenkenhofswalde-Franztal we found to be an exception. We were inclined to believe, however, that they had appropriated the mid-week devotional and "discussion" hour (cf. below IX. 9.) from the evangelical Pietists, specifically of the Moravian Brethren, and that the art of mutual edification practiced in Holland, especially in the Frisian congregations, where it came to an end between 1700 and 1800 (according to Ramseyer and ten Cate) had been introduced through Rhynsburger influence. Now we are told in no uncertain terms, however, that this was an old evangelical-Anabaptist custom. This information comes to us in the form of an article in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*

from the pen of the aged Elder Isaak Peters, formerly school teacher in Fuerstenau and Sparrau,[51] Molotschna, South Russia, then elder of the Pordenau Church, and now, since 1874, in Henderson, Nebraska, one of our most knowledgeable, if not the most knowledgeable student of Anabaptist literature. The article in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* vol. 37, 1906, for which we are deeply thankful to our aged honorable teacher, since it, at the same time, sheds light on the preparation of our ministers "in the bosom of the congregation," contains the following:

a) "An abstract from Mennonite writings for the *Mennonitische Rundschau* and *Herold der Wahrheit*. When, during the age of the Reformation, the various religious movements had taken on distinct forms and the Lutherans and other reformed groups had united in state churches, these strove to have all their ministers acquire academic degrees . . . at the universities. The so-called Anabaptists, the later Mennonites, however, who had maintained a living faith through mutual edification . . . even in ancient times during the period of the martyrs as a small flock, were unaware of such a necessity since they had for hundreds of years [as Waldensians, etc.] flourished without such institutions during periods of persecution, as a rose among thorns, through the preaching of the Gospel by laymen. Since they were united in congregations, which consisted solely of converted members, all of whom studied the Bible themselves, . . . they were content with the appointment of teachers and servants of the Word in line with the evangelical and apostolic example [without a university education]. . . . Instead of such institutions they fostered, aside from the sermons in the church service, Bible studies and mutual edification in their circles; for it is apparent from their remaining writings that such meetings existed in the 16th century during Menno Simons' and his co-worker's time and for some time thereafter, where every individual member of the congregation was given the opportunity to ask questions regarding difficult passages of Scripture. Even during the periods of persecution they met secretly to study God's Word and strengthen one another in accordance with the Apostolic teachings, I Thess. 5:11. . . . Here a passage of God's Word was read . . . and explained, the latter task performed by those more advanced in the faith or the ministers of the Word, in accordance with I Cor. 14:26-33, after which the church service was closed with prayer according to Acts 20:36; 21:5.

b) "Merely preaching at the services in the Mennonite congregations began where the Bible and mutual edification hours were discontinued, where laymen[52] ceased to study God's Word themselves, in accordance with John 5:39, and gave up the personal quest for a knowledge of the evangelical truth, . . . and were content to let the ministers present them with their faith in the sermons. This practice quickly introduced conflicting concepts and opinions concerning God's

Word because the ministers, who lacked the correct understanding due to the absence of mutual correction, began to draw their sermons from the writings of other confessions rather than immediately from God's Word (Jer. 2:13). . . . Christ directs his contempories, and thus us also, in John 6:45, to the prophetic word of the Old Testament in Jer. 31:33, 44, where it is written that all the believers of the new covenant will be taught by God directly. . . . This will not be achieved merely by listening to a sermon on a Sunday morning, however.

c) "A famous Mennonite minister, Hans de Ries, who died in 1619, about 60 years after Menno's death, contributes his education in preparation for the ministry, without having studied at the university, to these Bible and mutual edification meetings held in the Mennonite congregations. At that time ministers were not yet content to read a sermon they had copied from some educated theologian, for the ministers had, even in the Mennonite congregations, to draw the living water from its living, original source. Another man, S. F. Rues, reports on these Bible studies in his published report (1743) on the Mennonite congregations in the United Netherlands and asserts that many people were encouraged by them to study the Bible diligently, in accordance with John 5:39, thereby gaining the freedom to stand before the congregation and testify to the evangelical Truth, in accordance with I Thess. 5:11. Thus when they were pressed into service to make known God's great love and mercy for their own and everyman's salvation they could, like Paul, teach from their own experience, in accordance with Titus 3:5-7: 'He has saved us. . . .' And this man designates these Bible and mutual edification meetings as the only right way to prepare a person for the ministry. Another man, G. J. Ryswyck, declared, as late as 1825, that he had been prepared for the ministry in these Bible and mutual edification meetings of the Mennonites in the United Netherlands, and calls them the real school of the elected ministers.[53] [According to Isaak Peters, the children of the Anabaptists of old were told children's stories and the more mature young people were taught religion by means of a thorough study of God's Word by the ministers.] Now, however, the practice of mutual edification in accordance with Apostolic teaching is an innovation in many [West Prussian, Russian?] of our Mennonite congregations; but at all times the reintroduction of abandoned religious practices has been condemned as an innovation and opposed, in accordance with Luke 11:52. Isaak Peters, Henderson, Nebraska." [Freely abbreviated.]

d) Thus the Mennonites did not adopt the biblical edification and "discussion" meetings from the Rhynsburger and evangelical Pietists;[54] rather the latter adopted them from the Mennonites who gave them up

during the period of their decline only to adopt them later once again from the Pietists and Moravian Brethren [cf. IX. 9, Gnadenfeld]!

To supplement and illustrate the above we will add a few interpretations of the Mennonites of various regions and time periods by non-Mennonite authors.

VI.
CUSTOMS AND CHARACTER OF THE MENNONITES AS SEEN BY PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS

§20 1. *Concerning Mennonites in General* (According to Reiswitz and Wadzeck)

a) Reiswitz and Wadzeck believe [ca. 1820] that there is probably nothing more difficult than to try to determine the character of, and to attempt to arrive at some universal generalizations in regard to, such a widely dispersed religious group. For it is obvious that the national peculiarities of the countries in which the Mennonites lived should exert an influence upon their customs, and therefore the customs of the Mennonite settlers in Russia [55] should be very different from those of the American or Swiss Mennonites, even if they agree unanimously in matters of faith[? Holland]. Generally speaking, the Mennonites have been favorably regarded from the beginning. The assessment of the Dutch ambassador to France, van Baeuning, made to Marshall Turenne [d. 1675] is remarkable in this regard. Why do you not wish that one should tolerate them? They are the most honorable and agreeable people in the world. They do not grasp after positions of honor. We need not fear an uprising from a sect which has as one of its articles of faith that no one may bear arms. The Mennonites pay their share of all the State taxes [and lent it millions more which were never returned to them! Cf. further "Wealth of the Dutch Mennonites"]. We do not need more than that. [Really?] In their customs they are a good example to us; they ply trades and professions and do not squander either their goods or inheritance. They prefer never to swear an oath: all the better! Nor does this in the least diminish the prestige of the judiciary. These people deem themselves as obligated to tell the truth when they give their simple word as if they had sworn an oath. [Abbreviated.]

b) A famous Protestant divine, Abbot Henkel, says of the Mennonites in his church history, that they had received the rights of citizenship and exemption from military service from William of Orange, governor of the Netherlands, in 1568, as a people of means. These they had acquired through industry, a frugal life style,avoidance of litigation in the courts and trustworthiness in their business dealings.

c) That the teachings of the avoidance of all revenge, the subjection and obedience to the leaders of the congregation and indeed of the congregation as a whole, as well as many other teachings coupled with the discipline exercised by the congregation, should produce a unique brand of gentleness in the individual Mennonite, that their strict religiosity, their simple affirmation of the truth and their original frugality [simplicity and moderation] kept them from violent outbursts of passion and made deception as well as extreme anger infrequent occurrences, is a natural consequence of these principles. But the [earlier hostile] treatment on the part of their neighbors and government officials must have had a decisive influence on the formation of certain characteristics, which certain people have believed to have observed in them. Thus some have asserted that Mennonites are sly, slow, uncommunicative and distrustful. In the earlier period the Mennonites were hated more by all religious groups, avoided more by them and thus forced to rely more upon themselves. The constant fear in which they lived forced them to be cautious and deliberate. They sought to lead an exemplary pious and faultless life and to confirm this with outward appearance, in order, they believed, to be best able to refute the calumnies of their opponents.

d) It is probably because of this that a certain caution and fear, a certain withdrawal into oneself and a partial avoidance of alien religious groups arose in them, a unique characteristic some have discerned in their early history. [Only then?]

e) Their customs are simple, while crimes [56] and illegitimate births [56] are infrequent occurrences amongst them; still less frequent are suicides. [56] These assertions regarding the Mennonite congregations are confirmed by statistical evidence [ca. 1820]. Simplicity, order, nearly fearful cleanliness, abstention from sports and boisterous activity prevail [?!] in all friendly gatherings as well as within the circle of the individual family.

f) As a steward of his property, the Mennonite deserves praise; industry and cleanliness prevail in his home and farm buildings, peace in his family. No one has made more progress in agriculture than the Prussian Mennonite [to 1820].

g) The Mennonites aid and support their brethren in the faith in every case of necessity without being called upon to do so, indeed without having any agency or direction to take charge of such matters. [It is especially for this purpose that the deacon is the elder's assistant, and that the spiritual Mennonite congregation is an ancient apostolic association for mutual assistance: I Cor. 16:1 and other passages!] The poor among the Mennonites never suffer want; the Mennonite whose buildings have burned down, who has been robbed or who has met with

an accident can count on having nearly everything restored to him. [Compare our Russian Mennonite insurance system, an outgrowth of these principles.] Other Protestants and Catholics also often benefit in this way at the hands of the Mennonites, although this seldom happens where the other religious groups persecute the Mennonites and withdraw from them.

h) Some assert (Reiswitz & Wadzeck, p. 164) that they commonly deceive those with whom they have dealings. But why do they assert this? The first Mennonites came primarily from the Netherlands, the most important center of trade and commerce, to a province [Prussia] whose inhabitants were not nearly as initiated into the details of commercial life as were the Dutch, who are still the foremost traders of the world. Thus it happened that the Prussian had to learn from the Dutch Mennonite and pay for his instruction. As a consequence, the Dutchman's characteristic prudence, combined with a sober gravity in business matters, was interpreted as knavery on the part of the Mennonites. Ask the authorities what accusations [until 1820] of illegal activity in business matters were directed against them. But if one heeds the objective voice of truth one will be convinced that the Prussian Mennonites lead a frugal, moral and domestic life, that they are peaceful and useful citizens, and can serve their fellows citizens as truly honest examples of patriotism worthy of imitation in every state which is not founded on the Roman Catholic Church or the *miles perpetuus* [the eternal soldier].[57]

§21 2. The following episode from their history shows that the Mennonites in Prussia [in spite of the few expressions of affection toward them on the part of the Hohenzollern] demonstrated sympathy and a sincerely submissive gratitude toward their monarchs in times of need. In 1806 the Mennonite Abraham Nickel from Kulm in West Prussia had been commissioned by his congregation to present the royal couple with fifty thousand Imperial Thalers on the royal family's journey to Memel, an amount the Mennonite congregations had quickly and voluntarily collected during that fateful time to support the war as well as the personal expenses of the royal family. The simple, guileless manner assumed by the bearer, the undesigning good-naturedness with which this expression of sincere attachment was presented made them worthy of special royal favor. Nickel had to present his wife to the royal couple, and she received a shawl from her majesty the queen, which is still [1820] preserved as a relic. A few years ago [before 1820] Nickel, who had been impoverished by the war and became very old, received a gift of several hundred Thalers, at which occasion the above facts were officially made known. Thus Reiswitz and Wadzeck relate in their *Beitraege* of 1820. In our time and through the initiative of our honored brother and colleague

Pastor H. van der Smissen a memorial is being erected in honor of Nickel by the Mennonites of Germany. (*Mennonitische Blaetter.*)

§22 3. To portray the manner in which the old Dutch Mennonites carried on their trade and commerce and grew rich, we excerpt the following from a conference sermon of a contemporary Dutch Doopsgezinde minister. (*Zondagsbode,* 1899).

a) I imagine they acted like the man with whom Frederick the Great occasionally stayed when on maneuvers. Informed that his host, because he was wealthy, would not accept any payment, Frederick asked him: "Are you wealthy?" "Yes, your Majesty!" "How did you become wealthy?" "By always paying a penny more than the market price for everything and selling everything for a penny less." The king deemed the joke inappropriate, but the man explained it to him: "It is nevertheless the absolute truth; when the grain was inexpensive I always paid a penny more per bushel and then stored it in my granary; when the price rose, I sold it for a penny below the current price." Habbertsma says the same of the Mennonites: The simplicity of their way of life made it possible for them to be satisfied with half the commercial profit required by the others. They were careful in their treatment of the materials and their sorting of the goods, and punctual in the delivery of orders. Thus they gained a high degree of trust—something that is a prerequisite for any advantageous business transaction. They were highly regarded by princes who understood the well-being of their state. The House of Orange in this regard has a great claim on our gratitude. Over the centuries, many enterprises and industries in the Netherlands testified to the proficiency of the Anabaptists.

b) And once they had acquired money, much money, what did they do with it? In order to maintain their non-resistant status they were forced to pay out huge sums. I do not wish to mention all the pretexts—such as head money, guard money, ransom, etc.—used to make them pay. But a few incidents from their history in Friesland are in order. Who does not know of the three loans by the state of 1666 to 1676 amounting to a total of 1,032,943 guilders? The sum was large enough, especially when one compares the value of the money at that time to ours! Nothing was ever heard about a repayment.

c) They also paid out large sums of money freely. [This holds true especially for the period 1650 and later.] This offended the more conservative among them as well as the secular and ecclesiastical rulers outside their circles. They resented the fact that Menno's disciples also wanted to share in the enjoyments of the world. The Anabaptists assumed in their simplicity that since God had blessed their handiwork they should

be allowed, like anyone else, to enjoy the fruits of their labor: houses and lands, furniture and art, fancy foods, all of which they regarded as existing for them as well. This naivete on their part, however, was maliciously interpreted by others! They should be satisfied that they were allowed unhindered to serve their God in secret and in their own way. But they should not be allowed to build a church on the public highway or indulge their pleasures in any way where their paths might cross those of the members of the ruling [Reformed] church! How dare they prepare fancy meals to please their palates, allow their portraits to be painted by the best artists of the day, or let themselves be lauded in song by the poets! Is it not going too far when one finds the finest, the most beautiful, and best tasting things in their villas [summer homes] and on their landed estates?! Thus Justus van Effen fires many an arrow in their direction in his *Hollaendische Geschichte* (Dutch History). But no matter how much he mocks them or of what he accuses them, he is forced to grant to them the honor of being morally upright. And in spite of the fact that they may have ridden in dainty carriages or beautiful calashes according as they desired, served delicious meals, or surrounded themselves with all the comforts their age provided, they would have no part in the crude entertainments of their day. They spent "much money," [58] but in a refined manner.

d) They were indeed luxurious, and that to a high degree. Would Galenus Abrahams de Haan,[59] that highly meritorious teacher in Amsterdam, otherwise have found cause to castigate them? But by what criteria are we to measure them? For, according to the opinion of some of his own Anabaptist brothers, Galenus Abrahams was himself no competent judge. Even he had not separated himself from the main stream and Jan Stevens van Ryeveen [an Anabaptist writer of that time] tauntingly accused him of having set aside his double occupation of minister and doctor for a time to live outside the city in order to "indulge his appetites,"—as if the man's twofold occupation did not give him the right to relax and recuperate! But then this same Jan Stevens was also known as an opponent of the comforts of life and of everything that might appear to beautify it. Defiantly he boasts that an etching or a picture has never adorned his house, that he does not even possess a portrayal of a biblical scene or picture of Christ. Other homes of wealthy Mennonites were often collection centers of the choicest pieces of classical art available at the time, and artists found friends and patrons in the rich Mennonites. Thus far according to the *Zondagsbode*.

e) All of this surprises us. On the other hand, this splendid social status was not the lot of all the Mennonites of the time. And, in spite of everything, it must be said to the credit of the Dutch Mennonites of that period, that they did not spend these huge sums of money on artists, poets, scholars, and industrialists because of pressure or as a calculated

move to impress the state, or for their honor and amusement, but their "much money" also flowed freely in the direction of their oppressed and persecuted fellow believers, especially to those in Switzerland, the real vale of tears of our Anabaptist brethren till well into the 18th century. Waldensians, too, were the recipients of their liberality, as were the French Huguenots, whose fellow believers in German Switzerland acted as veritable wolves toward our brothers. Indeed, the reformer of German Switzerland, Ulrich Zwingli, had left an example by martyring and drowning his Anabaptist opponents, that is, Zwingli had authorized the state to perform these acts of reform and deliverance for the salvation of souls and the good of the church![60]

f) The Dutch Mennonites also performed great service to their brothers by exerting a powerful influence upon the Dutch government, thereby motivating it to intercede energetically on behalf of those persecuted by their governments. Indeed, when the intercession of the Dutch government on behalf of the cheated Mennonites of the free city of Danzig in 1700 remained fruitless, the Dutch Mennonites used their "gross money" to manipulate the Amsterdam stock exchange (the first of its kind in the world) in order to paralyze the credit and commerce of the proud city of Danzig until the Mennonites had been given their due! Even today Mennonites belong in the ranks of the Dutch money moguls. Important public servants and scholars have come from their ranks.

g) Scholarship was as common amongst the Dutch Mennonites as it was alien to the Prussian-Polish and Russian Mennonites. In his *Abriss der gesamt. Kirchengeschichte* (Outline of Church History) J. J. Herzog says: "The Dutch Anabaptists continue, even in the present, to be noted for their scholarship." Their collection of historical documents and studies on Anabaptism, known as the "Fundatie" in Amsterdam, is immense and very valuable.

§23 4. A totally different, to us more familiar sounding assessment than the above is provided for us by Reiswitz and Wadzeck concerning the Mennonites in France and Alsace-Lorraine, taken from French newspaper accounts of 1819.

a) The Anabaptist-Mennonites in France are descendants of the Anabaptists[61] who were driven out of Strasbourg by its magistracy in 1546 and Switzerland, especially Bern, during the sixteenth century. I do not believe that one will find a single family in the cities. They rent isolated farms, since they have turned nearly exclusively to farming. Industrious and intelligent, they have supplemented their lack of theoretical knowledge with experience and perfected every branch of agriculture. This respect, the faithful fulfillment of all contracts, the

punctuality of payments, all work together to give them preference at all times. They could hardly bring themselves to wear the tricolored cockade [the emblem of the Republic] when this was made compulsory. Like the Quakers, they neither swear oaths nor bear arms. They refrain from smoking, do not play at cards, take care of their destitute and support their fellow believers who have suffered a setback, not through any fault of their own, but because of an accident. On the whole they are very unlearned but honest, moderate and morally upright.

b) In his *Histoire des Baptistes* (History of the Baptists), Ramseyer says of these people: Since a special clause of the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 guaranteed the inhabitants of Alsace freedom of conscience, many Baptists withdrew to the valleys and the plateaus of the Vosges, at that time nearly totally removed from outside interference, where they have lived to the present virtually unnoticed by the powers of this world. Still, they distrusted the magnanimity of the rulers and placed little faith in their agreements. During a period lasting one hundred and fifty years not one of them owned even an acre of land. Their industrious families worked the land they rented, and they preserved their wealth in securities and cash, constantly prepared to emigrate. Only since the beginning of the 19th century have they begun to purchase land.

c) When the modern method of army recruitment was introduced, the Anabaptists of the Vosges sent a deputation to the most important members of the French Legislative Assembly. Thereupon the following decree of August 15, 1795,[62] was sent to the appropriate agencies by the Committee of Public Safety of the National Assembly: "Citizens! The Anabaptists in France have sent us their delegates in order to make known to us the fact that their confession of faith as well as their moral principles make it impossible for them to bear arms, and to beg us to use them in other ways in the army. We are convinced of their integrity and believe that a good government must utilize every virtue for the common good. Therefore we call upon you to demonstrate the same gentleness toward the Anabaptists which they manifest in their character; to see to it that they are not persecuted and to make available to them such service in the army compatible with their requests, such as in the engineering corps and railroad service, or also allow them to relieve themselves of all military service by paying a sum of money. Signed: Couthon, Barere, Herault, Saint-Just, Thuerrot, Robespierre, L. Carnot." [Thus did the men of the "Terror" of the French Revolution react to the "gentleness" of the Anabaptists! Cf. Matt. 5:5.] Napoleon Bonaparte followed this example of the Republic in regard to the Anabaptists. They died on the field of battle in great numbers, but without once having drawn a sword or fired a gun!

d) If the Mennonites of the Vosges get into a litigation with a stranger, says Michiels[63] in Ramseyer, p. 403, they demonstrate the

injustice of his case to him and the justice of their own position. If their proof remains unconvincing and time for reconsideration does not open the eyes of their opponent or awaken his conscience, they do not turn to the courts for redress: their principles do not permit them to call upon the severity of the law, indeed prohibit all application of force. In order to end the quarrel they give their opponent the sum of money or thing in question and say: since we cannot come to an agreement, my brother, keep what you have in your hands and may God bless it. Peace and concord are more important than all the transitory goods of this world. If the quarrel takes place in their own midst, the quarreling parties appeal to the judgment of their ministers, and if one party is found guilty it confesses its guilt at the next meeting of the congregation. An evil deed, an offence, a bad habit call for other regulations and a more severe punishment. Only one punishment is recognized by the Anabaptists' disciplinary code: expulsion and avoidance (shunning). As soon as one learns to know them [Michiels continues], one is constrained to love these virtuous, moderate, benevolent people; without condemning themselves to the monotonous and inactive life of the monastery they have been able to stay aloof from the main causes of vice, sorrow and fear; without stifling the personality of the individual through a communistic system they protect one another from want and humiliation.[64] "Their attitude toward war will sooner or later be victorious." [From 3.e to this point essentially according to the *Beitraege* and Ramseyer.]

5. Wichern's visit with the Mennonites in the Graudenz Lowlands. §24

We find a most attractive and heart warming account in No. 8 of the *Mennonitische Blaetter* of 1901 concerning a visit of J. H. Wichern, the founder of homes for neglected children, "Rauhes Haus" etc., and the so-called "father of home missions," to the Mennonites at a time when, at the request of the king, he was occupying an important post in the government of the Prussian state church as a high counsellor and member of the consistory:

a) "On the 28th of this month [October, 1852] I was accorded a genuine pleasure. Without any substantial loss of time or too much trouble I was able to pay a visit to the Mennonites of the Vistula lowlands [specifically the Montau congregation] . . . I wish that everyone, who longs to associate with simple Christians in order to gather new strength for any task in the midst of the follies of this world, could spend an afternoon and night with these lovely people as I did. We left the old Vistula city [Graudenz] about one o'clock noon accompanied by several ministers and a few other friends.

b) "In the Vistula lowlands proper the sons of Menno have built dikes and dug canals thereby making possible a better future for their

descendants, a future in which the latter totally forgot about the temporal privations their forefathers suffered. Brother Dietrichsen, whom I had brought along from Bromber, had arranged everything extremely well. Old father Dirks was already waiting with his large, prancing horses, while a second wagon, for the purpose of carrying the baggage, was being driven by his stepson. The road led partially over the dikes of the Vistula. In about an hour we were in the home of the old Dirks. Dirks is a farmer of handsome, indeed noble stature, with blue eyes. His total outward appearance speaks of wealth. The love and brotherly affection of the nearly gray-haired farmer have deep roots in Christianity. He is also a minister, as they say here, an 'admonisher' (Vermahner) [?!] of the congregation. His stepson, Peter Bartel, is also a minister. We were soon at Dirks' house, where his son-in-law, both farmer and song leader [Vorsaenger] of the congregation, is now farming. He was standing in front of the long clean building dressed in festive attire, i.e., in shirt sleeves; next to him stood his wife with their nine month old daughter, Mariechen, in her arms. The lovely young wife is the very picture of rustic simplicity and Christian innocence. She kissed the hand[65] of the famous stranger and led him into the house. First they passed through the large living room where a great deal of pewter stood along the wall, then through the bedroom with its two beds which had a small bedspread on top in order, it seemed, to accentuate the white sheets underneath even more. In the center of the bedspread one could see the initials of the married couple's first names sewn in in red satin. The wife was very happy that I liked it. Finally we came to the 'end room,' which can be found in all the larger farm houses here, a kind of extension of the main building.[66] A person is 'hosted' in this room, i.e., is put up here; it is intended for strangers and friends alike. Here the table was set and the hostess made her appearance to serve us. The men, with the exception of the host, took their seats around the table and immediately began lively conversations concerning the church and the kingdom of God, which I directed as much as possible to their congregation. Later I also learned to know all of their 'admonishers," first and foremost the vigorous Kopper, who is called the 'head' [?] and elder of the congregation; he is the leader of all and the dispenser of the sacraments. They all made an indelible impression upon me. The seriousness, the love and wisdom, which are solely fruits of the Gospel, all of which was combined with the greatest unpretentiousness, shamed me deeply. If you wish to remind me of this some Sunday evening in the winter, I will tell you more; now I do not have the time. After an hour we drove further into the Vistula lowlands. The land is productive and is cultivated in the manner of the 'Vierlaender.'[67] Incredible suffering is brought upon this region by the Vistula's constant flooding; the water rises four, five, indeed up to seven feet in the houses. When this happens

everything is moved up into the loft, even the animals, cows, horses and pigs. I have inspected a few such houses more closely. It is peculiar that the farmer, who still builds houses in the old style, has everything under one roof [68] which makes things very handy: without setting foot outside the house, the master or mistress of the house has access to everything even in winter or the worst of weather. Siebert, with whom I spent the following night, is only a small farmer with about one hundred and forty acres of land. When we drove onto his yard we found things just as they had been at Dirks: Siebert was in shirt sleeves, the venerable old woman stood in the doorway ready to welcome the guest, and the living room was decorated with brass utensils. All the teachers [school-teachers, non-Mennonites?] of the surrounding area, together with their wives and some daughters, were there as well, all-in-all about forty believers among whom we soon felt quite at home. For a long time already all of them had shared in our work [homes for neglected children, etc.], so that we were no strangers to one another even though I had up to that moment hardly known of their existence. Here, too, coffee was copiously served. The long table was also covered with all kinds of pastries baked by the people themselves. Then the elder, the splendid Kopper, brought me a quarto Bible, bound in a brass jacket, and a song book. They requested the exegesis of a passage of the Bible. I chose the story of the person afflicted with gout, a passage particularly pregnant with points of contact for this group. The Lord was with us and permitted us to experience anew what He means for the congregation of His saints, for those of us who believe and yet possess. Everyone kneeled down to pray. With a pathos both gripping and devout, Kopper recited the verses of the songs before they were sung. And after Viol had also spoken, Kopper said a simple closing prayer whereupon the meal was served. With the exception of the host, the hostess and the next of kin, we all sat at long tables. The meal began with bread and cheese. Meat and other courses followed. The host himself did not eat but served industriously, like a servant, and coordinated the work of the maids who were preparing the food in one corner of the room. In the center of the room, however, the old mother Siebert sat comfortably enthroned in a large chair in order the better to observe whether or not her husband or the maids omitted anything. The next of kin also stood behind the guests and listened to or entered into the conversation. For me it was an unforgettable meal in which both body and soul were satiated.

c) "When we were ready to take our leave the next morning, the old Siebert and his family kneeled down once more to commend us to the care of the Lord and His goodness. With hearts filled with thanks toward God and the brethren we took our departure. Riding in Siebert's wagon, we drove out of the Vistula lowlands to the plateau where we met the train. . . . By the way, I do not want to be misunderstood as having said

that all Mennonites are like the ones described above. Those whom I visited constituted only a select few who complain vigorously regarding the decay among their people and hold to strict moral discipline. The playing of cards, dancing, drinking are punished by expulsion from the congregation. They have very few poor people in their midst. In order to retain their landed property they permit no mixed marriages: whoever marries anyone outside the Mennonite faith is expelled, otherwise their property would fall into the hands of strangers, a predicament to be avoided since they are not allowed to acquire any more land without losing their right to exemption from military service. [Not the case today, since all of the Mennonites there must serve in the military.] It is for this reason that the surplus population emigrates, especially to Russia. As the Lord Lieutenant of the province told me, the Mennonites of the Elbing lowlands are so wealthy that they turn the scale in the election of those chamber deputies [members of the Prussian House of Representatives] elected by those who pay the highest taxes." (Thus far Wichern.)

§25 6. The main court preacher Stark concluded his *Geschichte der Taufgesinnten* (History of the Anabaptists) with: "They have finally had the good fortune to work their way up to the position of a considerable religious party which finds itself flourishing, a fate which they have earned because of the patience with which they endured the sufferings inflicted upon them throughout the centuries, but even more by the good behavior through which they, in due course, distinguished themselves amongst all Christians, and which everyone, who is concerned about the happiness of his fellow Christian and religious freedom, cannot begrudge them." (In Reiswitz and Wadzeck.)

7. *Conclusions*

§26 The above assessments of the Mennonites on the part of non-Mennonites are certainly very favorable, indeed perhaps much too favorable rather than too harsh for the majority of those living in the 17th, 18th and partially for those of the 19th century, a period which we must characterize as the decline of the movement. May this serve to console us when, in the following special section on the Mennonites in Russia, we will have to look at so many well documented darker aspects of our congregational life, darker aspects which, it has been demonstrated, were continued in Russia although they had their origin in the old homeland. In the face of all this impoverishment this much is clear, however, that evangelical teachings and apostolic church organization exercise an extraordinarily large influence upon the moral, cultural, economic and social development of a society, an influence which stands

in direct relation to the extent to which doctrine is pure and the concept of the church is in harmony with the holy fountain of the Scriptures. God's promise: "I will do good unto those who love me to the thousandth generation," has also been powerfully and clearly proven. Let us thankfully rejoice in this blessing of our fathers, under whose shadows we live as the birds in the branches of the tree which has grown to maturity from the mustard seed of our forefathers' faith! Let us rejoice, but not be proud or secure: let us much more fear to provoke the threat of punishment of this selfsame righteous God through our own fault; let us, where provocation has taken place, rather seek to turn this punishment from us through penance and renewal of life (Daniel 9!); let us, in our time and with the resources available to us, prepare new channels for the old stream in God's countryside, in accordance with the gifts and the possibilities, and therefore also the obligations, God has given us! Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27!



Tsarina Catherine II (1762-1796).

C.

THE MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD OF DUTCH-PRUSSIAN ORIGIN IN RUSSIA, 1789-1860

(i.e., from the immigration to the founding of a separate Mennonite Brethren Church)

VII.

THE EMIGRATION OF PRUSSIAN MENNONITES TO RUSSIA

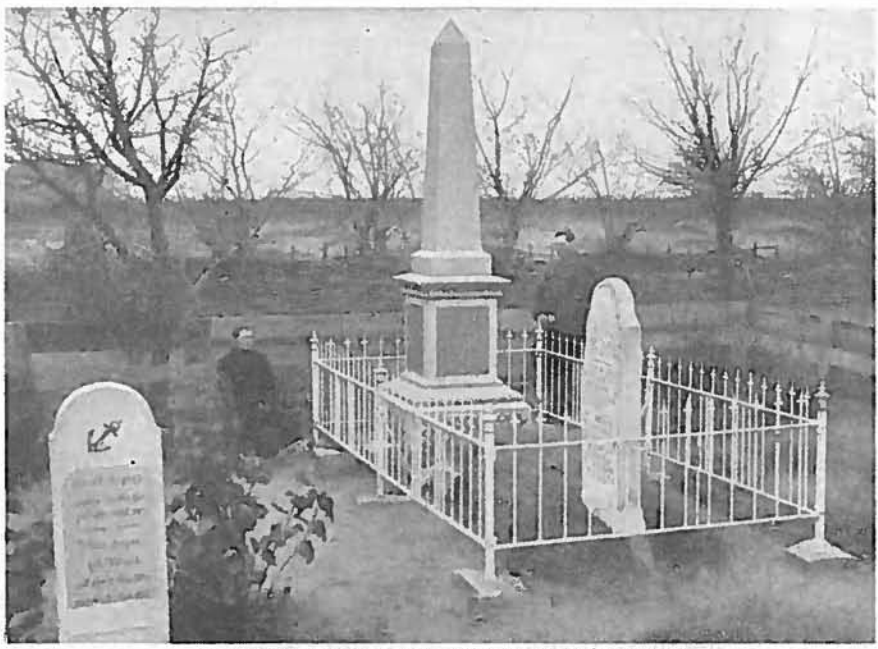
§27 1. It was during the reign of Frederick William II, nephew of Frederick II, "old Fritz," that our forefathers in Prussia came to be severely oppressed. At the same time, they were forbidden to emigrate! Those who emigrated had to steal their way out of the country, for a veritable system of oppression had been created.

§28 2. Large scale impoverishment, with a consequent decline in the cultural, religious, and ethical values of the once highly lauded Mennonites, developed in alarming proportions. Many became discouraged to the point of dull hopelessness. Even though large numbers of Mennonites had repeatedly gone to North America, that country was too far away, requiring a journey of several months by ship. Then news from the east burst upon them like a fairy tale![1] The great Catherine II, Empress of Russia, extended an invitation through her representative at the government of the free city[2] of Danzig, at that time still under Polish sovereignty, to the Mennonites of the Danzig area, and indirectly to the Mennonites of Prussia, to help settle and develop the vast tracts of land recently acquired in an area known as New Russia. They were promised complete freedom of religion, freedom from military service, etc., in perpetuity, with 182 acres (65 dessiatines) of land for each family. This was a Prussian Mennonite utopia[3] on earth! The invitation was confirmed through a Mr. von Trappe, an energetic and tactful special envoy sent by the empress. The first information came in the fall of 1786, and before winter set in, two delegates of the Danzig area Mennonites, Hoeppner

and Bartsch, went to Russia taking with them a letter of authorization signed by sixty Mennonite men and a letter of recommendation from von Trappe. In the spring of 1787, in the presence of some of her highest officials and the dignitaries of foreign governments, who had accompanied her on her famous "journey to Taurida," the Empress herself received them in a ceremonious, respectful and solemn manner, as did the powerful Russian Prince Potemkin, who showed them his good-will. Special respect and favor was extended the two Mennonite delegates when the Empress requested that they accompany her on her tour of the Crimean Peninsula. When, on their return journey, they came to St. Petersburg, the two delegates were introduced to Russia's heir-apparent, Paul I (who later became emperor and signed the Great Charter of Privileges, incorporating it into the law of the land), who accorded them the privilege of kissing his hand and in turn graciously kissed them on the cheek. This, together with the previously mentioned medal of honor given by Tsar Alexander I to Elder Cornelius Warkentin, is an important indication of the confidence, graciousness, and high expectations with which the Russian monarchs called and received our forefathers. Such acclaim could not last forever. We could not live with it, nor have we deserved it!

§29 3. Already in the fall of 1788 a large contingent of Mennonites set out for their new homeland.

§30 4.a) The very high expectations and demands relative to the overall efficiency of the Mennonites with which they were invited to Russia is demonstrated by the following excerpt of the "Plain Explanation etc. of the Kleine Gemeinde etc." 1845, Danzig, page 14: "Few people pay more attention to the Word of the Lord and to the monarch's will, which was transmitted to us through the Director and Commissioner Trappe in a royal communication that contains three admonitory points: First, that the Mennonites, as much as possible, diligently seek to maintain good teachers and pastors who will care for the salvation of their souls and foster a pious life, so that we will in Russia also let our light so shine before men that they will see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. Secondly, that we should guard against questionable members among us, and not bring those with us that openly live in serious vices, such as drunkenness, whereby the good name of the Mennonites in Russia could be disgraced. . . ." b) How thoroughly and carefully von Trappe proceeded can be seen from his visit to the Mennonites of Holland in Amsterdam. He probably wanted to study the community at its source and obtain the approval, co-operation and advice of the Dutch Anabaptists, who were the Mennonites' influential friends, advisors, and protectors in all countries. Compare the interesting letter from Amsterdam above, V, 5, Appendix 2.



Hoeppner Monument on the Island of Chortitza.



Bartsch Monument in the Rosental Colony near Chortitza.

VIII.
SETTLING IN RUSSIA

§31 1. In the year 1789 a group of 228 families formed the very first settlement in the District of Chortitza at the junction of the Dnieper and Chortitza rivers in the Province of Ekaterinoslav.[4] Another 118 families came in 1797, followed by others until a total of some 400 families from Prussia had migrated to the Chortitza Colony. Unspeakable difficulties, prompted in part by ignorance of the new conditions, the incompetence of the settlers, the disloyalty of many colony officials, and successors unworthy of von Trappe seemed at first to doom the community to failure. (Understandably, the first families seem to have come predominantly from the most impoverished and decayed segments of the Mennonite society; compare *#s 56 & 66*).

§32 2. Confused church issues compounded the problems. The first church ministers had been chosen while the group was en route, encamped in winter quarters at Dubrovna, in the Province of Mohilev, during 1788/89. Strangely enough, not a single minister had come in the first contingent of 228 families, an indication that those better economically situated, from whom the spiritual leaders were usually chosen, viewed the emigration with suspicion. The governing bodies of the churches in Prussia confirmed the newly elected ministers by letter. Some time later, the Chortitza Colony elected an elder, Behrent Penner, whose appointment was confirmed by letter. It was not until later though that a better ordering of affairs was instituted by the above-mentioned Cornelius Warkentin. He, together with Elder Cornelius Regier, had been sent by the congregations in Prussia in 1794. Elder Regier died in Chortitza, but on his deathbed he had ordained Cornelius Warkentin, who had been recognized only as a minister, charging him with the responsibility of setting all things in order. The wish that the Flemish and Frisians, who comprised a good third of the settlers, would unite in one church was never realized. The Frisian (Kronsweide) congregation was organized alongside that of the much larger Flemish (Chortitza) congregation. The extreme poverty was alleviated only through the coming of the Molotschna settlers. (The Chortitza settlement is dealt with in greater detail in section X, "Documentary Supplements," #53ff.)

§33 3. The first group of settlers in the Molotschna,[5] coming in 1803/04, consisted of 342 families. In 1808/09 ninety-nine more families came; in 1819/20 another 215 families comprising the Rudnerweide and Alexanderwohl congregations arrived; in 1835-40 some eighty families of the Gnadenfeld and Waldheim villages came so that by 1840 the Molotschna

immigration had been completed. A total of approximately 750 families had come to Molotschna from Prussia and from Waldheim, Poland. Together with the Chortitza settlers, some 1150 families, or 6,000 persons arrived in Southern Russia.

§34 4. The first step to regulate the affairs of the church in the Flemish settlement of Molotschna was taken in 1805 [6] when Elder Jakob Enns of Tiegenhagen was elected and installed by the Flemish Elder Johann Wiebe of Chortitza. This basically completed the organization of the church of the Mennonite brotherhood in South Russia in both areas.

IX.
UNREST AND REFORM EFFORTS IN THE MOLOTSCHNA CHURCHES

§35 1. Elder Jakob Enns' term of office was not a happy one. The different groups of "brethren," coming as they did from the various Prussian congregations, soon ran afoul of one another. Each had acquired experiences and customs in the independent administration of their church affairs that went back hundreds of years. Each congregation had lived in one location, with approximately the same families, under the same circumstances and customs for a long time. Now everything had changed: with the exception of doctrine, church organization and a not quite uniform tradition, the old accustomed ties had disappeared. Everything was new and everyone equal. In addition, they now lived in closed civil communities and jurisdictional districts in which they not only could, but were forced to perform the quite considerable, though menial, police and judicial tasks of that time. That would cost them dearly. In addition, Enns, although very energetic, was a man of little Spirit—perhaps better, entirely devoid of God's life-giving Spirit—and an exceedingly violent character. His quarrel with Klaas Wiens [whom he banned], first mayor and founder of Steinbach, caused a great deal of harm, for the temporal and spiritual spheres of influence—the spiritual "Mennonite brotherhood" and civil "Mennonite jurisdiction"—had yet to learn how to differentiate and get along with one another in this new frame of reference. Many could not grasp the fact that "brethren," elected to run the civil government, should exercise civil, police and judicial power—i.e. should rule in the ways of the world—over other "brethren," while others exercised such ecclesiastical powers as admonition and excommunication, powers which had very soon to be applied because of the not very pious character of the immigrants. This resulted in a new division, the first in Russia (even though the independent organization of

the Kronsweide Frisian congregation, in opposition to the initial goal, can be considered a kind of separation).

§36 2. Between 1812-19, under the leadership of Klaas Reimer and several of his fellow church leaders, the *Kleine Gemeinde* came into existence. Persecutions, instigated by Elder Enns, only made the breach irreparable. Nevertheless, the *Kleine Gemeinde* was soon tolerated and finally, through the mediation of Johann Cornies, was officially recognized by the government. The religious disposition of Klaas Reimer, although a sincerely pious one, was devoid of any joyous knowledge of God's grace, while his confessional stance in educational and cultural matters was indescribably narrow. Reimer even considered the reading of books published by people of other faiths to be a sign of apostasy and of the coming Antichrist. Extreme severity in matters of dress, residence, and furniture etc., complete the profile of this new church. Aside from these peculiarities, its members later became well-known—some even notorious—for their excessive diligence and thrift. ("They manage their affairs very well," was their reputation when we were still children.) An attempt to have their elder ordained by Elder Janzen of the Kronsweide Frisian church in Schoenwiese proved unsuccessful, for Janzen did not dare to defy the threats of the "large" congregation (as the largest Flemish contingent was often called) of the Chortitza and Molotschna colonies. The *Kleine Gemeinde*, therefore, had its Elder Klaas Reimer installed by one of the fellow-secessionist ministers. In later years even this church was unreservedly recognized by the other churches. After Klaas Reimer's death in 1838, the *Kleine Gemeinde* once more, through its minister Abraham Friesen, sought ordination from Elder Bernhard Fast in Ohrloff, though once more unsuccessfully (see *#58*,k,l,m). We possess no documentary evidence with regard to any further matters in the question of ordination.

The *Kleine Gemeinde* was a messenger calling the Molotschna Mennonites to repentance, but, it would appear to us, because it was too narrow-minded, too frightened, too isolationist and opposed to education, it never made a profound impact. "Kleengemendsch"—all those attitudes associated with the *Kleine Gemeinde*—had very definite connotations for the Molotschna Mennonites. The attempt by two elders of the Frisian Church, who had immigrated in 1819/20—Franz Goerz (Rudnerweide) and the "old Flemish" (Ukowallian) Peter Wedel (Alexanderwohl), both of whom possessed a vital Christianity and rejoiced in their state of grace—to win Klaas Reimer to their views failed. The fact that they conceded salvation to people of other faiths, read books written by men of other faiths, and believed in the millennium, filled that very pious soul with such alarm that any approach was made impossible. We must, at this point, mention a peculiar occurrence

(according to Klaas Reimer's own notes, which we are following in all essentials) that took place in the *Kleine Gemeinde*. Some of their ministers as well as members, because of their zeal against apostasy and the spirit of Antichrist, became extremely emotionally agitated during their penitential sermons and practices (such as prayer, fasting and self-castigation). Thus Reimer recounts that they would, in the dead of winter, lie in snow-filled ditches reciting long penitential prayers, as a consequence of which one young man died. In addition, they had dreams and saw visions of the impending wrath, further frightening the dreamers and their brothers and sisters. And yet they never arrived at a joyous understanding of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. Finally, according to Reimer's notes, the over-excited state of some (the natural consequence of hyper-nervous tension) led them into odious carnal sins. Reimer never allowed himself to be carried away, offered firm resistance, and was temporarily dismissed from office. Yet his sober influence—though too one-sided—won the day; and for a long time he remained the soul of the community, leaving his imprint firmly upon it. He even regarded extemporaneous preaching to be an act of arrogance and frivolity; he always read his own sermons, although he prepared them himself.

§36(2) In the 1860s the *Kleine Gemeinde* fell into complete disarray until, in 1870, a part of it was reorganized under Jakob Wiebe in the Crimea as the Krimmer (immersionist) Mennonite Brethren Church alongside the M.B. Church of 1860. Brother Wiebe, together with his entire congregation, emigrated to North America where they function quite successfully alongside the older one in an ever-growing relationship as a sister church. Wiebe, who is still alive (1910), is the first leader of this fellowship. Many *Kleine Gemeinde* characteristics are still apparent in Wiebe's church. A segment of the *Kleine Gemeinde*[7] has, as it appears, organized itself in the United States along the old lines. (Cf. further X. "Documentary Supplement," *#58.*)

§37 3. In the meantime, new disorders arose in the "large congregation." Elder Jakob Enns died in 1818 and was succeeded by Jakob Fast of Halbstadt. A godly man, Fast was as soft and weak-willed as his predecessor had been harsh and domineering. He died shortly, however, weary of his thorny and burdensome office, though believing and trusting in his God. Bernhard Fast (1821-1860) of Halbstadt and later of Tiege succeeded him. Instead of being installed in office by the Chortitza elder, as orthodox Flemish protocol required, he had the immigrant Rudnerweide Frisian elder, Franz Goerz, Sr., perform the ceremony. This factor, together with the admission of an evangelical missionary (Moritz) to the Lord's Supper (*#59*, c), the founding of a Bible Society as a branch

of the Russian Bible Society of St. Petersburg (*#59, d*), and the founding of a school of "higher" education[8] (the Ohrloff Association School—a simple, single class intermediary school! cf. *#59, e*) provided the impetus for the majority to disassociate itself from Elder Fast (about three-quarters of the "large" Flemish congregation; aside from these and the *Kleine Gemeinde* there also existed, since 1819/20, the Frisian Rudnerweide congregation[9] and that of the Old Flemish, Alexanderwohl. Only about 150 families sided with Bernhard Fast). This schism occurred in 1822-24. The separatists had the Chortitza Elder Jakob Dyck, Sr., install an elder of their own and declared themselves to be the "pure Flemish church" (*#59*). Later this "large" or Lichtenau congregation again experienced violent convulsions as a result of severe clashes with the more progressively minded local civil Mennonite authorities, such as Johann Cornies and others, and with the highest colonial authorities, the Supervisory Commission in Odessa. This resulted in the removal of,[10] or more correctly stated, the enforced resignation or withdrawal, of two of their elders, Warkentin and later Heinrich Wiens. However, the church still remained functional and later organized itself under three elders, and is known today as the combined churches of Lichtenau-Petershagen, Margenau, Schoensee, Pordenau and Alexanderkrone.[11] Originally it was as orthodox as the *Kleine Gemeinde,* which remained wholly Flemish in its teaching and church polity, whereas Bernhard Fast's congregation in Ohrloff was considered to be bent on innovation and apostasy from the true Christian-Mennonite faith of the fathers. Rigid orthodoxy, aversion to education, opposition to cultural improvement and the absence of a deep piety had long been the distinguishing characteristics of the masses of this large church. Today the intellectual and spiritual boundaries have been largely displaced and erased. Consequently this verdict is no longer applicable, or at best only conditionally so. (Cf. "Documentary Supplement," *#59 & 61.*)

§38 4. Bernhard Fast's very small congregation in Ohrloff thus became the progressive congregation both in cultural and partly also in religious matters, for a long time working closely with the Rudnerweide and Alexanderwohl congregations (*#59 & 69*). However, the fact that its members occupied positions of highest responsibility in the offices of the colony for many years during the time of Johann Cornies, thus exercising a strong influence on the higher authorities, led to difficulties. However, the Ohrloff Elder Bernhard Fast, ordinarily a congenial, godly and intelligent man, often evidenced tendencies favoring ecclesiastical politics and a strong hierarchy, thus alienating the Frisian congregation of Rudnerweide, the old Flemish Alexanderwohl congregation as well as Gnadenfeld later on, so that these eventually gave more support to the

"large congregation" in matters pertaining to the colony, where affairs of the church and local politics always tended to become intermingled.

§39 5. It is Ohrloff's great merit to have decisively worked toward progress in church and school, fostering a new vitality even before the Gnadenfeld congregation exerted its leading role in those areas in 1835-40. The founding of the Ohrloff Association School in the early 1820s was one of the first energetic efforts undertaken to improve the education of the Mennonites in Russia.

§40 6. Tobias Voth, son of a minister in the Brenkenhofswalde-Franztal Mennonite congregation near Driesen in Mark Brandenburg (later "Gnadenfeld" in Russia), had, through his own efforts, become a well-qualified teacher and held a very desirable teaching position in a West Prussian city. In the early 1820s he was called by the "Ohrloff School Society" to open its new private school. From the beginning, he had great success. Many eager students, well-attended inspirational evening meetings,[12] mission gatherings and other similar endeavors, a "literary society" for the dissemination of Christian and educational literature; these were new. An active participant in all these was Johann Cornies. Yet Voth could stay for only six years. His family did not ease his position and his work. He later went to Schoenwiese, with great sacrifice established his own private school, and finally had to leave there also. Then he worked at Steinbach and died in Berdiansk. He must have been a sincerely pious man of deep sensitivity. An aura of moving legends surrounds his memory like a halo. "Should this be dying?"[13] —he is supposed to have said in a state of bliss as life ebbed from him. He was a man of many talents: musically and poetically gifted, and an outstanding artist; it was he who gave us the powerful portrayal of Johann Cornies. The seed Voth sowed in his lifetime did not die. The late Heinrich Huebert, first elder of the Mennonite Brethren Church, as well as many of his other students and friends, received their first indelible Christian impressions and their love for education and culture from him. Even at an advanced age, Huebert liked to sing Voth's songs and tell of his work with sentimental affection. Voth's literary society, in which Cornies, Sr. actively participated, existed for many years, especially chaired by the dear, pious Minister Jakob Martens of Tiegenhagen, also a student of Voth's. Up to the time of his blessed death around 1870, Martens was an untiring disseminator of good literature. Understanding for the Christian life, deepened through growing knowledge and inner experience, has never been extinguished in the Ohrloff Church since the time of Voth and Bernhard Fast.

§41 7. Though struggling and occasionally defeated, the Ohrloff school system remained a strong force for education and progress, a role it

has retained to this very day. One cannot conceive of the Molotschna Mennonite community without this school. Voth's successor was Heinrich Heese, Sr. Although he lacked Voth's religious depth and sincerity, he saw the Mennonite position in Russia as well as the necessity of acquiring the Russian language with greater clarity. He was the first to offer instruction in the Russian language. In this regard, as the school society had pointed out, Voth had left something to be desired. Heese was a conscious and spirited Russian patriot to his death in the 1860s.

§42 8. Tobias Voth was the first among us in Russia to put into practice what we today call "brotherhood," a warmhearted Christian fellowship, something that is now found in the M.B. Church as well as in all truly vital Christian circles of the "old" or Mennonite Church. Voth had had close contact with the Prussian evangelical Pietists, both laymen and pastors. The seed Voth had sown had originally also been nurtured in Rudnerweide, which came into existence at that time. It was the later elder (since 1819)[14] of Rudnerweide, Franz Goerz, Sr., who induced Voth to give up his good position and move to Ohrloff, Russia. Services stressing missions, mission festivals, and warm, extemporaneous sermons were common occurrences under Franz Goerz, their first elder. This is confirmed by a letter from Elder Lenzmann of March 16, 1863, to the *Mennonitische Blaetter.* (Cf. further *#17*: "Brotherhood" in the Gnadenfeld congregation.]

§43 9. Later the colony of Gnadenfeld and its congregation became an influential nucleus of spiritual life in this "brotherhood" sense, as well as important for a progressive school system. This congregation has an interesting history of its own.[15] Around 1540, a number of Dutch Anabaptists, later known as Mennonites, moved to the formerly Polish region of Schwetz (now in the governmental district of Marienburg) in West Prussia and settled in Przechovka, the estate of a Polish lord. (Compare above under "Elder Wiebe.") After having lived there for over 200 years, the majority of the congregation, because of the pressure brought to bear upon them by the current Polish proprietor, found it necessary to seek a new home. In 1764, 32 families moved to Brandenburg or Neumark, where, on the estates of a royal counsellor, Franz von Brenkenhofswalde, located near the city of Driesen and the Netz river, they founded the colonies of Brenkenhofswalde, Franztal and others under the most favorable of circumstances. Their delegates, who had sought an audience with the king, had been coincidentally recognized as "Dutchmen" because of their speech and clothing by the Lord of Brenkenhofswalde, who accosted them, presented them to the king, who in turn granted them extraordinary privileges. They were

expected to drain the marshy land, a task they accomplished brilliantly in short order. Frederick II had just emerged from the Seven Years' War, thereby concluding the essentially military phase of his career, so that he could now devote himself to his land and people, becoming, in the process, the great father of his country. Thus, even in the midst of this militaristic Prussia, the non-combatant Mennonites were welcomed as victorious warriors against swamps, fever and poverty, at least until swamp and fever had been replaced by cultivated fields and prosperity.

Meanwhile "old Fritz" died and no one any longer "knew anything about Joseph." Once again it was time to move. In 1835, at a time of dire distress, the congregation, through its pious, energetic and intelligent Elder Wilhelm Lange (1812-41), obtained permission from Tsar Nicholas I, in spite of the fact that he had forbidden any further immigrations, to settle forty families in the Molotschna region with all the privileges accorded the first Mennonite colonies. During the intervening period, because of the transfer of many members to other confessions (partially the result of a restriction of their former privileges) as well as the earlier emigration of many families,[16] the number of the families became so small as not to reach forty. Consequently, with the full approval, indeed on the recommendation of the Prussian government, a number of other evangelical families were received into membership upon their confession of faith and baptism. These were all families who, having participated in the church services for some time, had long wished to join them. Among these were the gifted families of Lange,[17] Lenzmann, Klatt and others. In 1835, 1836 and 1840 the Gnadenfeld Colony—thus designated because the settlement had been an exceptional gift from the Tsar through God's grace—was founded with its forty farms. With its beautiful groves of trees[18] and ideal location, it is one of the most attractive among the many beautiful Mennonite villages, located like an oasis in the former desolate "Nogai plains."

§44 10. Under the very able leadership of elders and teachers such as Ernst Voot (or Voodt),[19] Peter Jantz, and others, the congregational life of the Brenkenhofswalde-Franztal Church—today the Gnadenfeld congregation—was a vigorous one. Aside from the two regular Sunday services and one week-night service, they conducted private services here and there in the homes under the supervision of the elder and the ministers. These were not preaching services, but open discussions in which everyone was free to speak; the persons directly in charge were chosen from the ranks of the brotherhood by the congregation and its council, and designated as discussion leaders. (Compare above V, Appendix 4.) Even the school, at first totally dependent upon the state, flourished during the first years. Two churches were built: in Brenkenhofswalde in 1778, and Franztal in 1787. The government

provided the land and the lumber; money was acquired from the Dutch Mennonites (to which, on the advice of the government, Elder Voot and Peter Jantz, a minister, travelled), and from those in Hamburg-Altona. The well-known Pastor (elder, "domine") Johannes Deknatel[20] of Amsterdam and Pastor Johann de Jager[21] of Hamburg-Altona became actively involved in the venture. Gradually, however, church and school deteriorated: no replacements could be found for the old and departed able leaders of the early decades. The spiritual life grew cold and the school deteriorated. Tobias Voth, a child of the congregation, and now a prophet of no consequence in his own home, left. But God provided for replacement. In 1790 a Lutheran youth by the name of Wilhelm Lange, in order to avoid being forcibly drafted, sought sanctuary in the Mennonite Church, and after a short time was accepted into membership upon his confession of faith and baptism. Lange was as pious as he was intelligent and eloquent; by 1812 he had become the elder. Scores of people from other faiths thronged to hear him speak. His preaching tours in West Prussia were well-received and very successful. It was he who, at a time of extreme need and despair, during which a large part of the congregation was about to be scattered in all directions, successfully negotiated with Tsar Nicholas I for permission to migrate to Russia. This permission was granted in the form of a large letter sealed with the imperial seal, which Lange was able to lay before his distressed congregation, thus saving it from ultimate dissolution. In 1835 he arrived in Russia with the first group of immigrants. Here too he served, a patriarchal, priestly gray-haired man with a flowing white "Menno-beard,"[22] to the benefit of all in his own and its sister congregations, loved and acknowledged by all until 1841. Later his nephew, the minister Wilhelm Lange, became a similarly gifted and beloved personality.

§45 11. Because of these men, Gnadenfeld became the center for a religious movement of greater warmth, the magnetic center for those who called themselves "brethren" long before the M.B. Church was organized. Many members of other Mennonite congregations formally joined Gnadenfeld because they sympathized with its position; but even more came as guests to the Sunday and festive services, especially to the Bible studies and mission festivals.[23] Here too private study groups sprang up, as did mission sewing circles, although the first experienced considerable opposition from the very beginning. Gnadenfeld gave birth to the M.B. Church of 1860, and we impart more details about this congregation first because none of our other immigrant congregations possesses such a wealth of evidence regarding its former way of life, its trials and tribulations, and, secondly, because the history of the M.B. Church cannot be separated from the history of the Gnadenfeld congregation. Our story is based on the archival material mentioned

earlier, the oral and written communications of the founders of the M.B. Church—Heinrich Huebert (Liebenau-Kuban), Jakob Reimer (Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld), Johann Claassen (Liebenau-Kuban), among others—and from the things I have seen and heard. The "pious" or "Bible students" of the 1850s spoke of Gnadenfeld in the spirit of the song: "To Mount Zion I am Bound"; the opponents of this movement nicknamed those from Gnadenfeld the "Lutheran Mennonites," "Moravians," "enthusiasts," and with great contempt, "the pious ones!"

§46 12. It was one of the peculiarities of this congregation that it had its own confession of faith,[24] probably in common with that of the Alexanderwohl congregation. The archives contain two such confessions: the first, according to the title-page, consisting of forty short articles was "translated from the Dutch into High German by Elder Peter Jantz of Franztal (Prussia) and copied in 1812 by Elder Wilhelm Lange of Brenkenhofswalde"; the second consists of thirty articles and "was drawn from the Bible in 1787 by the honorable elder and minister Jakob Wedell of Przechovka near Schwetz [cf. above V, 5 "Elder Wiebe"] and copied by Wilhelm Lange (the same as the above) in 1815." One is amazed at the theological education and the classic doctrinal insights which these simple farmer-bishops, contemporaries of such men as Cornelius Warkentin and Gerhard Wiebe, all trained within the bosom of the church, developed. The following tendencies should be noted in these confessions (the last of which, as we were informed, was used until recently in a somewhat abbreviated form in Gnadenfeld, when a joint confession of the Flemish and Frisian Mennonites in Russia was issued): the weighty doctrine of election through grace and free will which, in the old Flemish confession, had been framed from a somewhat one-sided Arminian point of view (with the stress upon free will), and which the Frisian confessions passed over in silence, received a cautious, middle-of-the-road treatment. Footwashing was taught as being a worshipful church function and was practiced after (later before) the communion service. The confession also speaks of "correct evangelical fasting in accordance with the Scriptures," and a conscious laying hold of the forgiveness of sins in Christ through a profound faith, as well as the explicitly stressed necessity for vigilance in regard to the doctrine of the firm security of the true believer.

§47 13. The proven cordial relations between the Brenkenhofswalde-Franztal congregations and the Moravian Brethren are also of considerable interest. Indeed, from 1812 until the emigration of 1835, the congregation stood, to a certain extent, under the protection and supervision of these Moravian Brethren! This came about in the following manner. Around 1812 various political organizations with

religious names and forms appeared in Prussia. As a consequence, all private assemblies of a religious nature were prohibited with the exception of those of the Moravian Brethren, who had the confidence of Frederick William III, and those under their control. The police became suspicious of the private Bible studies of the Neumark Mennonite congregation (Brenkenhofswalde-Franztal) and refused to concede that the Mennonites possessed a unique church organization, or indeed that this organization was based on specific ecclesiastical rights. Whether due to a deficient knowledge of political affairs, moral weakness in the face of police chicanery, or the fact that Elder W. Lange favored the Moravian Brethren—the Neumark Mennonite congregation (now "Gnadenfeld") placed itself under the care and protection—and supervision of the Moravian Church with regard to its private gatherings. It nonetheless remained Mennonite and derived a great blessing from this relationship. This account is taken from Heinrich Franz, Sr's official *Geschichte der Gemeinde und Kolonie Gnadenfeld* (History of the Church and Colony of Gnadenfeld). We have all benefitted from these blessings and thank God for this advance against "confessional self-consciousness" by those dear old people of the Neumark! It was really an emerging awareness of the *Una Sancta,* "the one holy universal Christian Church, the fellowship of saints."

§48 14. According to the Gnadenfeld "chronicle," a direct result of the influence exercised by such Moravian Brethren as the itinerant preachers Gottlieb Jahr, Niederschuh and others, was a clear understanding of the Scriptures, a vital Christianity and an understanding of, and love for, missions and education. The practice of this congregation (as of the fathers of the M.B. Church Heinrich Huebert, Jakob Reimer, Johann Claassen, Jakob Becker*—cf. *#171,* d) to have small children blessed in the presence of the congregation came as a direct consequence of the counsel of the Moravian Brethren. It should also be mentioned that during W. Lange's tenure in office the baptism of young people at a very early age (down to about 12 years of age) took place (cf. Elder W. Lange's baptismal book, kept since 1810). Under Wilhelm Lange the weekly one-hour baptismal instruction in Gnadenfeld was extended over a two-year period. Lange died in Gnadenfeld at the age of 76 in 1841.

§49 15. His successor was his younger relative, Friedrich Wilhelm Lange (1841-49). According to the baptismal record he was baptized in 1837 (probably on the way to Russia), the year of his arrival in Gnadenfeld. In 1838 he was unanimously elected to the position of minister, and in 1841 into the office of elder by a vote of 70 male votes. He was a brilliantly endowed, and as a consequence of his private studies, a thoroughly educated school teacher who had taught in a Prussian

* Ed. note: The various spellings of "Becker" have been standardized in this form.

Mennonite private school for many years. He was the pedagogical father of Heinrich Franz, Sr. (whose contribution to the educational system of the Russian Mennonites was immense) and other outstanding teachers of the Gnadenfeld congregation, who exercised a very considerable progressive influence upon the Mennonite school system in Russia.[25] Initially, Friedrich Lange's influence upon his own and the sister congregations was perhaps even greater than that of his predecessor. He was regarded as a brother and shepherd of the flock among the believers (the "brethren"), whose enthusiastic and reverential love he enjoyed. It was during his term of office, in 1845, that the Lutheran Pastor Wuest from Wuerttemberg, who was to play such an important role in the religious awakening of the South Russian Mennonites, especially those of the Molotschna, came to the separatist Lutheran "brotherhood" congregation at Neu-Hoffnung (former Wuerttemberg Pietists) near Berdiansk. For a time this led to the development of an intimate relationship between the two churches. Many Mennonites had already gone to hear Wuest's inaugural sermon. The religious life described above—mission conferences and festivals, singspirations, temperance movements, etc.—received a new impetus through him. This continued until 1848. At that point lamentable rumors began to circulate regarding Lange's personal life, rumors which, although monstrously exaggerated by his enemies, proved to be basically true (according to the Gnadenfeld "chronicle"). This proved to be a sad chapter in the history of the congregation. In October of 1849 Lange stepped down from office, moved away, and returned to the Lutheran Church. According to reports, he was very successfully active as teacher and substitute pastor in the Swedish Lutheran colony of Schlangendorf near the Dnieper River. No other incident has had a more damaging impact upon the development of Christianity in the Molotschna area than Lange's moral-spiritual misfortune. To this day it saddens our heart. The Saviour's serious words: "What I say to you, I say to all: be vigilant!" and: "God . . . gives grace to the humble," stand as a warning sign at this spiritual grave, especially to the more gifted and those entrusted with greater responsibilities. A wise and mighty man of Israel had fallen, mortally wounding a whole system, a whole intellectual and spiritual way of life, for a long time. Let that be enough on this matter. Let others pharisaically sound the bells of self-righteous indignation over the moral failures of those of different persuasions. (Cf. further XXV, the letter of March 16, 1863.)

§50 16. Bernhard Fast (later, in his last years, the very friendly protector of the M.B. Church), at the head of the other elders, intervened ruthlessly in the internal affairs of the almost lifeless, independent congregation, pouring wine but no oil into her wounds. All her ministers (Wilhelm and

Benjamin Lange, relatives of the Elder Wilhelm and F. W. Lange, among others) were declared to be "deposed" because they had "defended Lange" (before they had been forced to believe in his guilt!) and thus "they shared in his sins!" And the perplexed congregation tolerated this un-Mennonite and unevangelical intervention in her internal affairs: a sign of inner spiritual weakness on her part one would not have expected. From the point of view of Bernhard Fast and those who sided with him, this action was an indication that no clarity had as yet been reached regarding the separation of civil and ecclesiastical matters, regarding the community of interests in the major issues of Mennonite life, and the individual congregation's inviolable rights of self-determination in all matters spiritual over against all those caught in the new situation where civil authorities and the Mennonite Church formed two overlapping entities. While in their earlier homelands they had had nothing in common with one another.[26] The genesis and development of the M.B. Church in 1860 once again taught the Mennonite colonies to differentiate clearly between civil and ecclesiastical matters in accordance with the ancient evangelical Anabaptist precepts as Johann Claassen delineated them in his powerful and clearly written humble petition to His Imperial Majesty. It is our conviction that it was Gnadenfeld's demonstrated feeble-heartedness of 1849 which laid the foundation for the further weakening of that congregation by the exodus of the "brethren" (1860) and the "Friends of Jerusalem" in 1863. The congregation could no longer retain, moderate, control or utilize and go forward with the help of the more energetic and extreme elements of the "brethren" (Johann Claassen of Liebenau, Jakob Reimer of Felsental and their associates) and the "Friends of Jerusalem" (the brothers Lange, Nicholas Schmidt of Steinbach and associates), nor could it remain in the forefront of the reforming and life-giving renewal movements as it had for a quarter of a century (1835-60). Having been revived and illuminated by the new life that had come to it from the Moravian Brethren and their evangelical pietism as a consequence of its openness, this congregation now failed to progress any further toward Menno Simons' original position of a church composed of brethren baptized upon their confession of faith,[27] nor could it any longer transmit these vital elements to the other Mennonite churches. A number of these more vigorous opponents of the pietistic brethren had already left the congregation, welcoming Friedrich Lange's offensive failure as an excuse to do so. Finally, there remained only the religiously indifferent and those of the more intelligent and genuinely converted elements who were more conservative or "churchly minded," as the slogan since 1860 would have it.[28] Thus did Bernhard Fast rob the Gnadenfeld congregation of all its spokesmen! The members had hoped to call one of their current ministers as elder, but now they found themselves in a hopeless situation. It was not until 1851, when Bernhard

Fast and others arrived, that they were "allowed" to elect new ministers. Nicholas ("Klaas") Schmidt of Steinbach and August Lenzmann of Gnadenfeld were elected. And only in 1854 were they "allowed" to elect an elder. In May of that year August Lenzmann was elected by a large majority of votes and ordained by Elder Bernhard Fast in the following September. (For more details regarding Bernhard Fast, cf. X. "Documentary Supplement.")

§51 17. In spite of all these disheartening developments, the "brotherhood" continued to gravitate toward Gnadenfeld until 1858/59. (Lenzmann was looked upon as a cautious mainline churchman, but also as a "brother.") Ohrloff was no longer the prime center of the "brotherhood" fellowship movement it had been during the '20s and '30s: since 1835-40 Gnadenfeld was more attractive. For a long time Pastor Wuest of Neu-Hoffnung had intimate fellowship with the ministers of Gnadenfeld[29] (Wuests's influence and importance will be discussed more specifically in Chapter XII.) At this time we want merely to enumerate some of the more important "Wuest-brethren" in the Gnadenfeld congregation, and those who, although members of other congregations, had close ties to Gnadenfeld: Johann Claassen, Liebenau; his wife's brother Jakob Reimer of Felsental, Gnadenfeld; Wilhelm Bartel, long resident in Berdiansk; Abram Cornelsen, a teacher in Elizabethtal and member of the Rudnerweide congregation; Jakob Becker, Rudnerweide and member of that congregation; Heinrich Huebert, Liebenau, member of the Ohrloff congregation; and Abraham Peters, Ladekopp, member of the Petershagen congregation. These were the most important co-founders of the M.B. Church in 1860. Elder August Lenzmann, Gnadenfeld; Andreas Flaming, Schardau, minister of the Gnadenfeld Church; Heinrich Schmidt, Pastva, minister of the Gnadenfeld Church; Benjamin Jantz and Abraham Braun, Grossweide (in later years a "Felsentaler Friend"); Peter Siemens, Conteniusfeld, a prominent leader of the Bible study movement and later a well-known teacher who joined the Ohrloff and then the M.B. Church; Abram Matthies, Rudnerweide; Leonhard Sudermann, Berdiansk, a minister and then elder of the Berdiansk congregation first affiliated with Gnadenfeld, which later became independent, who died as an elder in America; Jakob Buhler, minister in Berdiansk, who died young, having served as Wuest's "Jonathan"; Hermann Sudermann, Berdiansk, student in the "Rauhes Haus" near Hamburg; Wilhelm and Benjamin Lange, former ministers of the Gnadenfeld congregation (cf. above *#16*): Nicholas Schmidt, Gnadenfeld, minister at Steinbach; Johann Schmidt Gnadenfeld; Johannes Lange, Gnadenfeld; Hausknecht, a teacher in Gnadenfeld and probably a Swiss Mennonite; Abram Wiebe and Dietrich Dick, Rudnerweide; Peter Dick and his son Abram, Pordenau, were all

original co-founders of the "Church of the Temple" or "Friends of Jerusalem" (adherents of Christoph Hoffmann from Kirchenhardthof in Wuerttemberg), but not all of them stayed with the movement. Thus Minister Abram Dick—as many others who had originally joined the "temple" movement—later joined and then became minister of the Ohrloff congregation. Aside from Heinrich Huebert there were other outstanding believers in the Ohrloff congregation before and after 1860, though not as explicitly "brothers of Wuest" but more in line with Tobias Voth and his associates, such as: Peter Fast, teacher at Taschtschenak for 25 years, and his brother Daniel, teacher in Tiegenhagen and Blumenort, both ministers and elders later in the M.B. Church; Bernhard Harder, teacher in Halbstadt, Blumenstein and other places, since 1861 minister of the Halbstadt-Ohrloff congregation, to date the most influential Mennonite minister and most prominent Mennonite poet in Russia, who died as an itinerant minister in Neu-Halbstadt in 1883; Kroeker, teacher in Muensterberg, who died as a minister in Sagradovka; Johann Fast, teacher in Schoenau, and later in the Crimea, who died in America as a member of the "Krimmer M.B. Church" if we are not mistaken; Johann Harder, minister in Blumenstein, later elder of the Ohrloff congregation; Jakob Martens of Tiegenhagen, minister and assistant elder of the Halbstadt-Ohrloff congregation and not a few others.

18. a) The brethren Johann Claassen of Liebenau, Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld, Heinrich Huebert of Liebenau, Abram Wiebe and Abram Matthies of Rudnerweide, Nicholas Schmidt of Steinbach, Elder August Lenzmann of Gnadenfeld, Johann Schmidt of Gnadenfeld, Peter and Abram Dick of Pordenau, along with many others, founded the so-called "Brethren School" in Gnadenfeld. For the conditions of the time, it received remarkable financial and other support: contributions ranged from 25 to 1,000 rubles in silver (a bank-note of 3,500 from Abram Wiebe of Rudnerweide). To support this venture, the group invested in a brick factory and a lumber yard, which brought substantial returns. Even the Wuerttemberg brethren in Neu-Hoffnung participated with a donation of 400 rubles, and their brethren in Kharkov and Moscow took an interest in the school: A Moscow brother, Maibom, the owner of a factory, donated a piano, and believers from St. Petersburg and Reval hoped that the school would produce workers for home missions similar to what the "Rauhes Haus" was doing for the Protestant churches. §52

b) Johann Claassen of Liebenau stood in the forefront of this venture, giving freely of his time, money, inspiration and strength. Better education, a strongly Christian training based on the principles of Pietism, especially for their own children, the practicing of philanthropy for the common good (that is why the school was sometimes called a

"school for orphans," since talented orphans and the children of impoverished parents were to be given preference in it), or "home missions" were to be the goals of the school as far as Claassen and his associates were concerned. They patterned the school after the Moravian institutions and Wichern's rescue missions, specifically the "Rauhes Haus" of Hamburg. This Gnadenfeld school, along with the Ohrloff Association School, was accredited in 1859 (?) by the Supervisory Commission in Odessa as a teacher-training institute.

c) Twice Claassen travelled to St. Petersburg and Reval on matters relating to the school, stopping en route in Kharkov and Moscow to establish intimate relations with the "brethren" in these areas, gaining access to their very highest circles, especially in St. Petersburg and Reval. Pastor Landesen and the merchant Heymann were two especially close friends in Kharkov. On his first journey, in 1854, he was accompanied by four young brethren: Wilhelm Bartel, a Bible colporteur and evangelist under the auspices of the pietistic Mennonites and the Wuerttemberg brethren, Hermann Sudermann of Berdiansk, Jakob Knauer, one of the Wuerttemberg men, and Wilhelm Heine of Prischib.

d) Knauer and Heine remained in Reval for several months in the "Rescue Home" of "Papa Bauer" (the housefather and Wichern's former student), whereupon they proceeded to the Mission House in Barmen, becoming missionaries themselves. Heine went to Sumatra (later he was pastor for many years in Neu-Stuttgart near Berdiansk). The departure of these two young men from Russia—as difficult as that was in those days—was made possible through the mediation of the Duke of Oldenburg (a relative of the ruling tsarist family) in St. Petersburg, who had become interested in the matter through Claassen's friends amongst the pastors and aristocratic families in Reval and St. Petersburg. Hermann Sudermann remained in Reval for three years at "Papa Bauer's" institute (which was heavily supported by the love-offerings of the Mennonite and Wuerttemberg brethren) as an intern and student. He was to become the director of the Brotherhood School. In 1857 Claassen made a second trip to Reval and St. Petersburg, this time accompanied by Johann Schmidt of Gnadenfeld. Some time later, Hermann Sudermann, accompanied by Nicholas Schmidt of Steinbach, went to Wichern's "Rauhes Haus" where he studied and did some practical work for a time. Nicholas Schmidt also visited the well-known orthodox Lutheran revivalist and father of missions, Pastor Harms, in Hermannsburg and his institution, Christian Hoffmann of Kirchenhardthof, and others which probably included Moravian institutions. As a result, Johann Lange of Gnadenfeld was sent to Kirchenhardthof.

e) Meanwhile the "Brotherhood School" was opened in 1857, with Hausknecht as temporary teacher and set up in temporary quarters.

Before long, however, Heinrich Franz, Sr., the famous teacher, was appointed to the school against the wishes of Claassen and Reimer, who did not believe his Christianity to be motivated by a "living faith." Nicholas and Johan Schmidt, on the other hand, as well as Lenzmann, preferred Franz. No doubt, Franz was a much more gifted teacher than Hausknecht, as Claassen, Reimer and even Hausknecht himself recognized—yet for Claassen and Reimer religious ideals were the most important. Already in 1858 the "brethren" began to divide into the more extreme "enthusiasts" (*froehlichen*), who, no longer satisfied with Wuest, over-emphasized "free grace" and the resulting joy, and the more "rational" and "church-minded," in whose direction, in contrast to his earlier period when Claassen and Reimer had been his intimates, Wuest more and more inclined (cf. XIII. "Pastor Wuest"). Thus a serious conflict erupted between Claassen, Reimer and their adherents on the one hand, and the two Schmidts and their adherents on the other, during which Lenzmann, who was acting as mediator and judge in his capacity as elder, was not a little tormented. By 1858 the rupture was complete. Deeply hurt, Claassen, Reimer and their group withdrew from the school, or as they have since maintained, were expelled. In the same year the spiritual-brotherly ties between Claassen and Reimer, on the one hand, and Nicholas Schmidt and Lenzmann on the other—i.e.,[30] the two groups led by these two men—were completely severed although the formal institutional-ecclesiastical break did not immediately take place. It followed somewhat later, in 1859/60, with the withdrawal of Claassen and his adherents. (In 1862/63 the formation of the "Temple Church" followed. It was between Schmidt and his adherents, the "Templers," and Lenzmann, Franz and their "strict church" followers that the worst quarrel and most severe rupture took place.)

f) In 1861 Johannes Lange replaced Franz as teacher; along with him came his brother Friedrich. Supported by well-to-do friends, Franz started his own school in Gnadenfeld, while Johann and Friedrich Lange carried on a very successful instructional program for a few years in the imposing building[31] of the former "Brotherhood School," now known as the "Tempel School." At the same time, the school served as the focal point and meeting place of the "Friends of Jerusalem," "Templers," or "Hoffmanites," whose real apostle was the energetic and brilliantly gifted Johann Lange. (Hermann Sudermann was totally displaced and forgotten: being a quiet and modest person, he was quickly forgotten during the period of embittered strife. He continued to live in Berdiansk as a private citizen and moved to the United States with the first emigrants in 1874. We have no further information regarding his subsequent activities.)

g) Upon the insistence of the Gnadenfeld congregation and the Mennonite Council of Church Leaders, the Lange brothers were forced to

leave their posts for administrative reasons, whereupon, together with the most important "Templers," they left for the Caucasus where they founded "Tempelhof" and Orbelianovka in the vicinity of Piatigorsk. Here they enthusiastically continued their educational endeavors. Even Hausknecht went with them. We have attempted to sketch briefly—around a few dates and in anticipation of what is to follow—the history of the Mennonite "Templers."

h) The extent to which personal sympathy and antipathy, jealousy, injustice, religious narrow-mindedness and factionalism played into the quarrel between the two, then three groups—the extent to which adherence to principles and honest idealism were at work, is difficult to say. Much, though not everything, is clarified in Chapters XI to XXV, the history of the M.B. Church. At any rate, Claassen believed himself to have been deprived of the rewards of his sacrifices and the victory of his ideals. He was and remained an advocate of cultural improvement (and as such an admirer and student of Johann Cornies), as is indicated by his activity on behalf of the Kuban settlement (XXV, B) and many other incidents. It also needs to be said that in spite of all that had happened, Claassen and Reimer entrusted the education of their own sons to Lange's school. And when their plans in Gnadenfeld had completely failed, Claassen, Reimer and some others founded a school for the poor amongst the German (nearly exclusively Lutheran and Catholic) foreigners in the market town of Grosstokmak, situated between Ladekopp and Fuerstenau. This school collapsed in 1861 due to an inadequate teaching staff, support and, perhaps more importantly, due to a lack of interest, since purely religious concerns stood in the forefront of the battle and early life of the new M.B. Church (XVII).

i) The great harm derived from the fact that the "brethren" of Claassen's stripe could not work together with the "Templers" of his time cannot be described. An immense latent intellectual wealth was contained in the latter's pedagogical, ethico-religious and social goals. We will be able to touch upon the "Templer" movement only several more times, and that only in passing; enough, however, to allow—for the purposes of this book—their true nature and, sadly! their degeneration (in our view) to be expressed. A sense of profound sadness overcomes us whenever we deal with the contentions and divisions of these three groups of "brethren," and during the quarter century which we have spent on this study we have not learned how to remove this sense of grief from our soul. For some of the best men given to us in Russia during an entire century were to be found in all three groups! Men who rank next to our two most prominent ones: Johann Cornies and the minister Bernhard Harder. The evil, apparently incurable "Anabaptist illness," the passion to divide, drove them apart and diminished each individual's strength considerably.

19. While this "brotherhood strife" and the consequent schism were taking place within the bosom of the Gnadenfeld congregation, the Ohrloff congregation was experiencing its own ugly period of turmoil during which a number of important members separated themselves from it. The initial strife erupted in the so-called "barley dispute"[32] and was continued in the "church-building" quarrel of Neu-Halbstadt. Since this strife was not spawned by a dispute over principles but by human evil and selfishness, or shortsightedness and weakness, we shall not discuss the matter here—which was in any case carried on by both sides in an unholy manner[33]—and refer to it only in the footnotes where necessary in order to clarify other matters (in the documents) in Chapter XVII, etc. The consequence was that Ohrloff and its company of ministers came to stand alone over against the combined ministers of all the other congregations, an especially important circumstance in the creation of the new M.B. Church (cf. XI-XVIII). However much each side may have erred, around 1860 Ohrloff was still regarded by the more progressive—the "brethren," "the Friends of Jerusalem," and the "landless"[34]—as the wise and upright church, the more so since it contained more spiritually alive and gifted ministers, as well as members, than the Mennonite Church at large; and the place vacated by those who went to Lichtenau because of the strife was quickly filled by those from other congregations, especially by such who had become disillusioned in the M.B. Church and the Templers during the first two turbulent years of their existence, as well as by families from the dissolving *Kleine Gemeinde*, so that by 1863 Ohrloff was able to establish a new congregation, Neukirch. §52(2)

X.
DOCUMENTARY SUPPLEMENT TO THE HISTORY OF THE SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD IN SOUTH RUSSIA TO 1860

In the following we submit a series of contemporary documents, or excerpts from them, for the purpose of verification, expansion and illustration of the foregoing brief account.

1. *"Brief [manuscript] History of our Mennonite Brethren," by Heinrich Heese, Sr.* (Supplement to *#32*).

Heinrich Heese, who had been active (first as secretary of the Chortitza governmental district and part-time teacher, then for c. 15 years as teacher in the Ohrloff Association School as the successor of §53

Tobias Voth, and finally as founder of and teacher in the Chortitza Secondary School and, in his ripe old age, as a private school teacher in Einlage) in the Chortitza and Molotschna colonies since 1818, had been born a Lutheran, but early in his youth had become a Mennonite and married a Mennonite girl. His history of the earlier period was drawn exclusively from the information imparted to him by the "old folks" and is interesting because it is a kind of self-examination by these people of their role as contemporaries or transmitters of the opinions and recollections of their forefathers. His information regarding the later period is drawn from his own involvement and experiences. He ended his short account in the '60s, well advanced in years. Being a traditional churchman, he was an impassioned, indeed bitter opponent of the emerging M.B. Church,[35] and consequently biased in his opinions. Heese's use of the expression "Mennonite brethren" refers to the Mennonites in general. We will delete such items as have already been mentioned in connection with him. Heese begins:

a) *In Times Past*

"Not even our enemies could deny that our original Mennonite community was characterized by a quiet life, a sincere brotherly love and a simple faith in the Holy Gospel. [The emigration from the Netherlands to North Germany and Prussia, the accomplishments and problems there, etc.]. . . . Quietly and without complaint they prayed for their enemies in accordance with the will of God, who helped them out of all difficulties. The evil done them by those who denounced them before the government was repaid with good, heaping coals of fire on their heads, thus bringing them to repentance. Not infrequently such an accuser would come to the leaders of the church by night, ask for forgiveness and express the heartfelt wish to be received into the fellowship of the Mennonite brethren. Such a request had to be declined for the moment; but in the end and upon an upright confession, a written certification was sent to the home church in Holland, confirming their godly life, where, after having been instructed in the articles of faith, the church would hear their testimony and receive them into the membership of the Mennonite Church. Through the addition of such Polish[36] and German converts, a gradual but inconspicuous increase was recorded. Our fathers put forth every effort to provide physical sustenance according to God's commands; for this they were blessed. Similarly, but with even greater diligence, they nourished their souls with the bread of life. God the Father and the Son dwelt in their midst, filling their homes with heavenly peace.

"Besides the instruction provided by the church, fathers and mothers taught the Bible to their children, especially on Sundays, holidays and during the long winter nights. Frivolity, the smoking of

tobacco and the drinking of brandy by the youth they considered very serious sins. While the sons and daughters of our forefathers could all read and write, the education of the children of the rural population of the other faiths lagged far behind. According to the custom of the time, they sang songs of thanksgiving to the loveliest of melodies at their morning and evening devotions. Their worship services were very solemn; instead of using organ music, as the state churches did, the Mennonites would sing so sublimely that all hearts would soften to the blessed joy in Christ and even the angels in heaven would join in praising and honoring God our Savior Jesus Christ. The songbooks of the time had notes above each song; it was only later, when the notes were omitted in the newer revised hymnals, that the singing in our churches deteriorated into the present-day disharmony. To the extent to which the harmonious singing in our churches was lost, to the same extent our fathers lost their holy way of life in true love to God and His holy Word. [Should one not draw the opposite conclusion: that the beautiful singing disappeared with the growing indifference?]. In those early times so blessed of God, the servants of the church expounded the Word of God to the attentive hearers in such an animated and solemn manner that the Spirit of God dwelt among them, guiding them, to the glory of God, into all truth. Many visitors, Germans as well as Poles, even though they could not understand the content of the praises, were so deeply impressed with the pious harmony of the service that they could neither remove the impression from their heart nor come to rest until they too belonged to the number of the brethren. [Further exposition regarding the worth of 'harmonious singing']. . . . I shall never forget how the melodious singing of the Gnadenfeld Church [in the Molotschna] appealed to me, reminding me of the organ music I had heard in my youth and awakening within me the most pleasant memories. . . . [In spite of the decline in holiness] . . . the Mennonite congregation in the marshlands of Prussia still retained visible traces of piety and love for one's fellow-man into the years of my youth, of which I could give many touching examples as I experienced them in that time of trouble. [Farming also continued to be carried on at a very high level]. . . . During the Seven Years' War, which began in 1756, the Russians nearly invariably spent the winters in West Prussia; as a consequence, the commander-in-chief of the cavalry, Count Rumianzev, had found occasion to acquaint himself with the Mennonite farms located in the marshlands. . . . It was precisely these model farms of our forefathers which provided the original motivation for Russia to welcome us with such extraordinary privileges. . . . Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Catherine the Great wished to establish some model farms, to serve as examples for her citizens, in her newly conquered southern provinces. . . . It was at this point that Count Rumianzev [in the

imperial council] recounted his experiences with regard to the Mennonite agricultural methods in West Prussia. His report received endorsement from the highest quarters. . . .

b) *In Our Times*

"Two separate churches [in the District of Chortitza] exist in our Mennonite community: the Flemish, the largest in Chortitza, and the Frisian in Kronsweide. . . . Here in Russia, the Mennonites possess their own civil government, something not the case in Prussia, where they lived in subordination but as a consequence managed to avoid a great deal of strife. Because of the absence of a vital faith and love, our otherwise precious freedoms will eventually lead to the downfall of our spiritual fellowship. Obedience, without which there can be no peace, seems more and more to be in a process of dissolution. While en route from Prussia, our [Chortitza] forefathers lived in plenty due to imperial generosity; but once here they began to suffer. Their food consisted mainly of an unseasoned broth made from spoiled rye flour brought in from distant Russian warehouses and milled from kiln-dried rye; for as yet there were no mills in the vicinity. The surrounding country-side was almost entirely waste-land, and among the scattered settlers there were many vagabonds; conditions in the city of Ekaterinoslav were miserable and the courts there inconvenient. In a real sense our forefathers stood abandoned, poor as a churchmouse in body and soul. Through the written authorization from Prussia they had an elder [Behrent Penner] confirmed. . . . It hurt him to be forced to officiate at the Lord's Supper in a pair of home-made shoes, commonly worn at the time, whereupon four of the participating brethren banded together to buy him a pair of boots which one of the delegates, Bartsch, made for him. The poor community desired with all its heart to partake of the holy sacrament, but when they remembered the solemnity of these occasions in their former homeland, where they dressed in their Sunday best, there was loud sobbing.

c) "The arrival of our Molotschna brethren during the years 1803-05 saved our community from total bankruptcy; for it was through them that money once again began to circulate amongst us. These comely brethren encountered much better conditions than had our [Chortitza] fathers; for the late nobleman Contenius [the chief welfare officer for the South Russian colonists] had already arrived, and it was he who poured out upon them all the benefits of which the government was capable, benefits which had been so sparingly extended to our fathers. These new immigrants paid our fathers in cash for living quarters and barns, which till then had not been used because, for the sake of convenience, our cattle had been fed outside throughout the winter. Our fathers, in return for a fee, also took care of their purchases

from the Russians and earned money while assisting them in the building-up of their colony on the Molotschna. Thus the wholly enervated community was partially restored to life. Lord Contenius was also continuously present with his untiring words of advice, encouragement and threats. Our insensitivity, however, caused him considerable grief. [Various matters concerning culture follow: sheep-breeding, silk industry]. . . . Before his death in 1830,[37] Lord Contenius had the pleasure of seeing our community prosper. With him we also buried the paternal care we had experienced; those days will not come again, for we have outgrown the shoes of our childhood and wish to be mature. [The later Privy Councillors, Hahn and Baron Rosen played the same role, however!] Today our industry could nearly universally be considered passable in contrast to our old lethargy; morals, too, have improved to the same degree. Nevertheless, our education still stands at a deplorably low level. The reading of the sermons in the churches has begun to be somewhat livelier, and the need for a more meaningful education for the children seems to be recognized, but there still seems to be no taste [in the Chortitza area] for singing in harmony. We will have to place our hopes in our secondary schools. Some of the young teachers from these schools . . . are proving to be quite useful. They also supported the school's singing in harmony at the welcoming ceremonies in honor of our heir to the throne on the banks of the Dnieper; that was praiseworthy. O that our Lord Jesus would no longer be greeted with such distorted singing in our churches, from which even the angels turn away in offence! . . . It is true that our church community is progressing very slowly to its eternal salvation, for the children hardly become acquainted with Jesus, their divine friend, in the homes of their own parents. Nor is there as yet much sympathy for bringing the Gospel to the heathen. Nevertheless, I hope that when I depart this life, the Lord will keep them from the deception of the adversary, who is already personally on the scene, and will rouse them to a living ministry to the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then the Spirit of God will guide them into all truth to their eternal salvation! Amen.

d) "From the very beginning, our Molotschna brethren were much better off; they did not have to experience such depressing physical poverty. Lord Contenius, the noble social officer, supported them in word and deed, and they for their part had a child-like trust in him. They were enterprising, established themselves well, pursued farming with vigor, planted neat gardens and lived quite comfortably. [Cultural and historical information follows]. . . . Their attractive, green colonies, their practical arrangement won them the good will of the highest authorities: [in the form of royal visits] twice by the exalted Tsar Alexander I, and once by His Imperial Highness and heir to the throne, the present Lord

and Tsar Alexander II. . . . That is worthy of praise and pleasing to every patriot.

e) "Alongside such good characteristics as diligence and orderliness, destructive events also occurred, namely the unfortunate divisions within the church, of which there was no end. . . .

f) "The Ohrloff congregation, even though considerably reduced in numbers [because of the new divisions around 1860: the 'barley dispute,' etc., *#99*] still has talented ministers in the church and supports an exemplary church school [the Association School]. . . ."

2. *Disorders and Conflicts in the Chortitza Community* (Supplement to *#32*)

§54 a) The unfortunate conflicts in the Chortitza settlement are described for us in the lovely, simple little booklet entitled *Erste Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus dem Danziger Gebiet nach Suedrussland. Aus den nachgelassenen Papieren des verstorbenen Kirchenlehrers Peter Hildebrand* (The First Emigration of the Danzig Mennonites to South Russia. Taken from the Literary Remains of the Deceased Minister [38] Peter Hildebrand). Printed and published in Halbstadt, by P. Neufeld, 1888. Hildebrand had been a member of the first group of immigrants and had been a part of everything that he writes about. His notes extend to 1836. The following are excerpts and summarizations.

b) "I must, however, in the course of this account, touch on incidents which fill the human soul with horror and at times make the very name of Mennonite, which I had held in high regard since my youth, repulsive. . . . Had God not planted the seed of Christianity in my heart, which forms the basis upon which I discern the will of God and which convinced me that we should move to Russia, even I might perhaps have become disgruntled. Since this is not the case, however, I forgive the mistakes of those who went astray and pray God that He may not hold their sins against them. With this conviction I bow myself to the very dust at the feet of my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, and humbly implore the triune God that He may continue to rule in mercy over me, my family and the colony, in whose midst we live, as well as over the entire human race. May God bless our imperial family under whose protection we enjoy so many benefits. . . .

c) "After all the people, even the delegates and their families, had arrived in Chortitza (1789), the anger of the people against the latter began to surface more and more. I still remember that shortly after we had arrived several men approached our wagon and asked whether this was the place where we were to settle. Hoeppner answered that it was,

whereupon he proceeded to explain to them that the earlier plan of settlement had been exchanged for this one by the Baron [Potemkin, the governor of New Russia] because the former one, the "Nischekrymisch plan," which would have located the colony near Berislav, was too close to the border of the restless Tatars. Nor had the war with the Turks come to an end. But they hardly allowed him to speak, far less to convince them. No one had as yet given this plan serious consideration. Nevertheless, they descended with such fury upon Hoeppner as cannot adequately be described with words. I thought: Are these also Mennonites? Nominally, yes! This rebellious spirit grew like a snowball until it reached immense proportions. And yet, some rational people were among them, and these investigated the land to its borders and came back satisfied. Among them was a certain Anton Klassen, who calmed the storm somwhat with his remark that he wished to see no better land since this was comparable to land in Germany which sold for 400 guilders per acre. Such land should certainly provide one with a decent living if God would add His blessing and send good times. With such words he tried to calm the dissatisfied elements.

d) "Preparations to build were made. . . . But the angry settlers would not think of building; for they believed, and expressed it in so many words, that if no one would submit to these conditions they would be given better land. [Because of the elevation they considered the land to be too dry. Compare further the judgment of Senator Contenius]. . . . When the vice-governor himself arrived to investigate who the trouble makers were . . . these gave themselves away with their rude speeches and answers whereupon they were incarcerated for a time. But this only kindled the fire even more against Hoeppner. And even though he stood up for them, they called him 'the soul-merchant!' Nevertheless, the orders of the government had now to be obeyed. . . . The dissatisfaction and the desire to move away, however, could not be banned from their hearts. . . . [Numerous colonial directors, one worse than the other, succeeded one another to the detriment of the colony. Finally, the delegates themselves gave up their powers and presented their important papers to the ministers of the church. In the end a malicious Italian became the director. He attempted to extort money from the delegates, but without success. All the differences had supposedly been settled during the stay in the colony of the Prussian ministers Cornelius Regier and Cornelius Warkentin, and a document of reconciliation had indeed been drawn up to this effect. But the peace did not prevail, since new intrigues revolved around the director.]

e) "The actual agreement reached with the director was not made known; but that it had been decided to take revenge on the delegates subsequently became clear. . . . The director saw this occasion as an

opportunity to even the score with the delegates, since his first attempt to extort money from them had failed. His minions were soon mobilized. Since they too had left their first love, the church ministers failed in their duty to quench the fire. The delegates were separated from the congregation . . . Bartsch quickly resorted to pleading and, along with two adulterers, was readmitted. Hoeppner, the other delegate, would not succumb to such measures; and when he finally did give in, they refused to readmit him since they had already brought legal proceedings against him in the imperial court. Since the accusation brought against him, probably with the help of the director, had been carefully drawn up and signed, there was no hope of leniency and indeed the full force of the judgment was handed down to him. Twelve witnesses had to swear that the accusation was correct, which at first horrified the leaders, but in order to save their honor they forfeited their souls. Justice and human love were no longer to be found here: Hoeppner was taken into custody by the brethren, brought to Ekaterinoslav and put in jail. All his property was registered and sealed, and a guard was placed at his house. Be alarmed, dear children, and watch out that you never participate in such vulgar acts of violence where one runs rough-shod over his fellow-man. Hardly any disciples of our Lord were to be found amongst us any more. Nevertheless, we intend to hope and believe that God has retained some seed unto Himself, otherwise there would have been no hope for us. The pain all this inflicted upon the wife and children can hardly be expressed.

f) "An auction sale was soon announced. All items were to be sold for cash, and because there was still very little money circulating in the colony the prospect of realizing any substantial amount of cash was meager, not even enough to cover the imperial debts [the advance which he had received from the government was to be repaid from the receipts of the sale]. As a consequence, some thinking members of the colony informed the landlords [Russian noblemen] of the surrounding region and asked them to attend the auction in the hope that they might buy something in order to make a profit. But because these landlords believed the accusation against Hoeppner to have been without foundation, they regarded the action of the Mennonites to be unmerciful and illegal. For Hoeppner had been accused of embezzling funds. But the case against him had been decided in the highest courts and the sentence had to be fulfilled, and in cases dealing with injustice Tsar Paul was very severe. The day of the sale arrived . . . and when enough cash had been realized to satisfy the demands of the crown, the sale was terminated. And now sympathy began to surface: the person who had bought the sheep returned ten of them; the one who had purchased the horses returned a yearling; and he who had bought the cattle returned a cow. These were Christians of the Greek Orthodox Church with whom, dear

reader, you would also like to be in heaven! The kinds of injustices that can be perpetrated by a group of rabble-rousers coming from our very midst is amply demonstrated by these events. Instead, according to the teachings of Christ, they should have sought to convict the culprits of the error of their ways, punish them according to their crimes, and attempt to convert them and lead them to improvement. These rabble-rousers, however, vented their rage against him in senseless blustering, thereby bringing misfortune down upon themselves and their offspring.

"It was rumored that Hoeppner had been sent to Siberia. But those in immediate authority over him showed sympathy and delayed executing the order as long as possible. Lutheran Christians bailed him out of jail. And then a miracle occurred. Tsar Paul died suddenly and was succeeded by Tsar Alexander I who pardoned all those imprisoned debtors who owed the crown less than 2,000 rubles. Hoeppner was released immediately. Had his property not already been sold, it would not now have been confiscated. He had been in prison for about one year, but remained excluded from the colony community after his release and never sought to be reinstated. . . . He became a citizen of the nearby city of Alexandrovsk but did not take out membership in any church. . . . Finally, he attempted once more to be accepted into the membership of the Frisian [Kronsweide] congregation, against whose exclusive organization he had himself, although originally a Frisian, earlier taken a strong position. Neither the congregation nor the elder raised any objections against his request, since they too acknowledged that the Flemish Church had not dealt with him in love. [The Frisian Church had had no part in the cruel treatment of the delegates in spite of the fact that, according to Hildebrand, more quarrels and disorders erupted in it during the early years than in the Flemish Church.] Therefore they decided to accept him as one who had been disciplined by the church.[39] For many years he lived, together with his wife and children, at peace in this congregation on his own property [on the island Chortitza] with his son Jakob Hoeppner [40] until he died. . . . Earlier he had made his children promise, in lieu of an oath, to bury him and his wife on his own property. This they did. . . .

g) [Concerning the guilt or innocence of the delegates, Hildebrand reports the following on page 91]: "I believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that this [the assertion that the delegates had embezzled funds] was an unjustified accusation. For the government had paid the monies out to each individual with extreme care, always being careful that the receipts matched the monies paid out. But no rational person will deny that the delegates had now and then dealt harshly with the people, nor will he deny that it was difficult to deal in love and patience with people who

were as agitated as these were. Certainly the delegates did make real mistakes which, although settled later, were never really forgotten by their opponents. In this regard the ministers of the church were guilty of the sin of neglect: they neglected, namely, to impress the fact upon the members that wrongs which have been righted may not constantly be referred to in a censorious manner. . . ." [Thus far according to Hildebrand.]

h) In his *Die Chortitza Mennoniten,* the Reverend D. H. Epp[41] has the following to say about Hoeppner: "Hoeppner, for the role he played during the first immigration and the founding of the colony, deserves greater recognition from his brethren, from us, than many have been willing to concede him. . . ." [At its centennial celebration the colony erected a memorial on Hoeppner's grave.]

i) In his little booklet, mentioned above, Hildebrand also recounts many sad episodes in the moral life of the young colony. In one village the Mennonite settlers built themselves a tavern where they, in a drunken stupor, committed a murder. All of this tends to disillusion the reader, especially when he has read all the favorable things written in the books by men of other faiths, or recalls Menno Simon's "Withdrawal from the Catholic Church" and the chapter on the martyrs. But things could hardly have been different where, for a long time, the children had been admitted to the church solely upon a catechetical faith, and where unworthy members were not removed from the congregation until they became contrite but were merely subjected to a temporary ecclesiastical punishment. And yet the "good seed", of which Hildebrand speaks, remained strong and plentiful: so much salt and light was present that the old ideals were never quite vanquished. Sufficient strength was available to avert both an economic and a final moral and spiritual ruin (for proof cf. *#57*) and to effect salvage and reform efforts later in every respect with varying degrees of success. Periods of emigration and settlement are always extremely trying, revealing everything that is evil and rotten and forcing the good and the healthy to fight to its very existence. Even the later groups of our people, who emigrated and settled under much more favorable conditions—the M.B. groups included—have amply demonstrated the truth of the above. That is the way it was already during the exodus from Egypt and the settlement in Canaan! Read the book of Judges!

k) "Through the withdrawal of the delegates from public life," writes D. H. Epp in another place, "the mutual attacks by the opposing parties were ameliorated. . . . It is true that thick fog banks once again swept over the Chortitza Colony in the '40s when the 'Agricultural Society' took up the quarrel with the colony administration and the ministers of the church, which enjoyed the support of the vast majority of the church

members. However, this quarrel no longer produced any permanent divisions in the church." [Compare VI: "Lichtenau" and "Heinrich Wiens."]

3. *The Imperial Charter or Charter of Privileges* (Supplement to *#32*)

§55 In spite of all the disheartening experiences of the early years the settlers never lost sight of the future or the welfare of their descendants with regard to spiritual and civil matters. A new petition, to be given the promised imperial privileges, was submitted to the government. Elder David Epp and Minister Gerhard Willms were dispatched to St. Petersburg on June 29, 1798, to procure this document. After more than two years of anxious waiting in the capital city, they finally returned on October 28, 1800. A parchment with gold print, this document, whose unessential articles we have condensed while giving the important ones in full, reads as follows:

"We, through God's enabling grace,
Paul the First
Emperor and Autocrat of all Russians, etc.
etc., etc.,

"In order to authenticate our most gracious grant in response to the petition received by us from the Mennonites settled in the New Russian provinces, who, according to the testimony of their supervisors[42] and because of their outstanding industry and their commendable way of life, can serve as an example to the others settled there, and who, because of this, have become deserving of our special attention, we have, in this charter of privileges granted to them, not only affirmed all of the rights and privileges previously agreed to, but have also, in order to encourage their thrift and concern for agriculture still more, graciously granted them additional rights in the following articles.

"First: we reaffirm to them and their descendants the religious freedoms[43] promised earlier, by virtue of which they are entitled to follow their faith and church practices unhindered. We also graciously grant, that if occasion should require them to testify in a court of law, their spoken 'yes' or 'no' shall be considered legal in lieu of an oath.

"Second: [Concerns the allotment of 54 dessiatines of land to each family]. . . .

"Third: [Concerns the freedom to establish businesses]. . . .

"Fourth: [Gives them the specific right to brew beer, vinegar and brandy]. . . .

"Fifth: [No stranger may build a tavern or otherwise sell brandy on

the property of the Mennonites without their permission]. . . .

"Sixth: We affirm our most gracious guarantee that none of the Mennonites already settled or who may choose to settle in our domain in the future, nor their children and their descendants, shall at any time be forced to serve in the military [44] or civil service, unless they specifically volunteer for them.

"Seventh: [Exemption from the extended quartering of military troops, transportation or service to the crown such as the obligation to maintain roads and bridges in good repair]. . . .

"Eighth: [Concerns the rights of property and ownership, grants them their own inheritance practices and care of orphans]. . . .

"Ninth: [Grants them ten to fifteen years' exemption from imperial taxation]. . . .

"Tenth: [An order to all authorities in no way to reduce these privileges but to protect them in all instances]. . . .

"Given in the city of Gatschino, the 6th of September in the year 1800 A.D., the fourth of our reign and the second as Grand Master.

Paul,
Count of Rostoptschin."

(An unabridged version of the Charter of Privileges appears in D. Epp's *Die Chortitza Mennoniten.*)

IV. *Evaluation of the Mennonite Colonies by the Privy Councillor, i.e. Senator Contenius, and Privy Councillor A. Klaus* (Supplement to *#32-34*)

§56 1. a) To our consolation, a much more favorable evaluation of our earliest immigrant forefathers, than that from those personally and immediately involved, came from outsiders, in particular from Privy Councillor A. Klaus' pamphlet entitled *Unsere Kolonien* (Our Colonies), written at the request of the government toward the end of the '60s.

b) On page 180 of the German translation by Jakob Toews we read the following regarding the Chortitza settlers: "In spite of the enormous advantages granted the Mennonites, and their reputation as model farmers, the colonization they had undertaken never went well. Various reasons were responsible for this, all [!?] of them, however, beyond the control of the settlers themselves. According to the testimony of the Privy Councillor and later Senator Contenius, already familiar to the reader, who inspected the southern colonies during the years 1798 to 1800,[45] the Mennonites 'generally lived sober and clean domestic lives and were diligent and assiduous.' Yet in spite of this Contenius expressed

doubt that these settlers would ever achieve 'a good position.' The region around Chortitza is located on an arid, rocky elevation. Because of the dry soil, insufficient precipitation and an inadequate water supply, according to Contenius the grasses burnt, the grain grew poorly, while the farmer often worked and seeded his fields in vain. Only seldom could a settler produce enough to feed his family. Only cattle raising brought them profit and so many of the settlers changed to this aspect of farming. They had brought horses and cattle not native to Russia with them in sufficient numbers. But a shortage of grazing land and hay [?!] kept the settlers from expanding this branch of agriculture to the extent they were accustomed and would have wished. The severe winters were especially harmful since neither the settlers nor their cattle were used to them. [Aside from all this, the land each settler had been allotted proved to be too small. . . .] The concentration of the Mennonites in an area that did not provide them with the requisite advantages was the main cause for these extremely poor conditions; but to this was added the fact that the government, in contrast to the privileges and conditions it had promised, proferred only very untimely and inadequate assistance. For the sums of money paid out to them in small and irregular installments, coming as they did only after an extended period of time during which the settlers had been unable to settle down, merely covered the cost of living and were insufficient to allow them to establish themselves solidly, so that many houses remained unfinished while thirty-eight families had no homes at all . . . (compare also *#66*).

c) "Such doubts concerning the future success of our colonization projects," writes A. Klaus, "will call forth an involuntary smile from such present-day [46] readers who are more or less familiar with the situation of our settlers. . . . It should be self-evident that the Mennonites could acquire a better understanding of the agricultural conditions of the land only through heavy sacrifices and persistent and thoughtful application. But the evidence available to us convinces us that material sacrifices did not intimidate the settlers nor were they deficient in moral courage. . . ."

2. Regarding the economic situation in the Molotschna Colony, A. Klaus writes the following in his *Unsere Kolonien*: ". . . In spite of the fact that the area around the Molotschna had an inadequate rainfall and was completely treeless, the entire subsequent Mennonite migration came primarily to this region. No longer did only the impoverished people from Prussia move to us [as was the case earlier in Chortitza], but now a good number of wealthy farmers, indeed some capitalists, were among them. Due to these circumstances Molotschna came to be the Mennonite economic and intellectual focal point, the pride and darling of the [imperial] colonial authorities. . . ."

3. Regarding the Chortitza and Molotschna settlements in general, Klaus writes the following:

a) "Until 1824 this colonization advanced mainly due to the influx of new members from outside. During the same period the number of villages in the Molotschna area increased to 40 while Chortitza grew to 18. . . . From then on Mennonite colonization was carried on with the indigenous resources drawn from the mother colonies. . . ." [From 1824 onward the immigration of aliens was prohibited in principle and allowed only in exceptional circumstances. See above, Gnadenfeld. By 1860 there were 18 villages in the Chortitza area and 55 in the Molotschna area, including the Hutterite[47] colony and 5 villages in the Bergthal region located in the District of Mariupol. The population stood at about 30,000, consisting of about 6,000 families. They owned about 165,000 dessiatines crown lands and 100,000 dessiatines of privately acquired land on which a large number of ranches, industrial plants and estates existed. One dessiatine equals 2 Morgen[48] or 1 1/11 French hectars or 2 7/10 American acres.]

b) "The Mennonite villages," Klaus continues, "are generally not very large; they usually consisted of 13 to 50 farms of approximately 65 dessiatines each. . . . It might be superfluous to add that each village was extremely spacious and arranged in an orderly fashion, that each yard, the location of the house and farm buildings, their outside facades and inner arrangement, were all identical, differing only in size and roominess or solidity and quality of materials used. [Wood in the older, while in the later period adobe or burned bricks—the latter used as a pantile—were the most common materials.] Groves of trees and orchards surround each village, and on either side of the streets there are shady gardens and flower-beds. . . .

c) "Gradually the young people who left the farms turned to professions, trades and businesses, etc. They founded new villages on land set aside for such purposes and began farming on their own or rented land, by preference on that of the Nogai. The Mennonites very quickly [notwithstanding the fear expressed by Contenius] rose to a level of prosperity and organization hitherto unknown among us. As though by magic one village after another arose on the steppes where earlier neither water nor shrub, not to speak of trees, had been common; plenty of wholesome well-water could be found while groves of fruit, shade and mulberry trees soon grew in abundance; lush, well-cared-for meadows, large herds of sheep, cattle and horses, all of the best breeds, were plentiful. [Merino sheep-raising and the silk industry, which had for decades been an important part of the economy, have been nearly completely supplanted by grain-farming. . . .] All three districts, or in other words 'the Mennonite Brotherhood of New Russia' have for some

time had their own fire insurance company. . . . The Brotherhood formulates its own rules without any participation of the government agencies. . . ." [Thus far Klaus.]

d) Unfortunately, however, already long before 1860 the problem of the landless was gnawing like a cancer at this community. The 165,000 dessiatines of crown lands were owned, directly or indirectly, by one third [49] of the families who, with all the power and means available to a ruling class, kept the landless families from sharing in any of its benefits. Even though they were bound together by the closest ties of ancestry and religion, the differences between these two "estates," where father and son, brother and brother, minister and member of the congregation often confronted one another in accordance with the position each had been allocated by fate, became so great as to end in a kind of "class war" which later ran its course in the most wretched fashion during the '60s, '70s and '80s. It came to a close only when new tracts of land were made available through private owners, or by the mother colonies who had acquired land for purposes of expansion. The history of this "land-question" has still to be written!

V. *Letters of Counsel Written by a Chortitza Elder* (Supplement to *#32*)

§57 Let us turn our special attention once more to Chortitza. The following letters of Elder Jakob Dyk, Sr., of 1846 to Isaak Penner, school teacher in Rosengart, which we present here, occasionally somewhat abbreviated, as given in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* of 1900, show that in spite of all the intellectual and spiritual impoverishment,[50] especially of the vast majority of the spiritual leaders of both colonies, some "seed" was always present [see Peter Hildebrand!].

The first letter: "Dear friend in Christ! May the Spirit of Truth, to which the world cannot attain, guide you, as He can and wills to do, into all truth. I am not worthy to be called your teacher; but together with you I thank God the Father through Christ that the heavenly teacher, in the person of the Holy Spirit, has received you into His school. I note from your letter that He has already begun to instruct you; for His first order of business, after He has begun to work within us, is to convict us of the worldliness in us (John 16:8), that is, He reminds us of our sins, a remembrance which in turn produces a repentance unto salvation, II Cor. 7:10. Thus we are humbled, and Peter says that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (I Peter 5:5). This grace is manifested in that He forgives all our sins through Christ and imparts to us a hatred of sins and their lusts. Many times, however, God temporarily conceals the assurance of His grace to us. During such times we occasionally become

quite anxious and believe that our efforts to see our sins—their number and size—in detail is in vain. At such times one implores God for grace, for a mind that faithfully follows the Lord, for a contrite heart which hungers and thirsts (Matt. 5) after righteousness. It is then that we desire to do good and experience the truth in Christ's words when He said: The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. At such times one has to pray for the will to do and to accomplish that which is good, but also to learn to wait patiently until Christ has been formed in us and enables us to do good works. Therefore it is necessary to pray daily and diligently against the evil drives of the flesh. Only when we give our will completely and voluntarily to sin and remain in it does sin have a right to condemn us.

"Regarding the various governmental[51] regulations and the different opinions of the people that you mention, I answer thus: Let all things come as they may, you dare not turn to the one or the other. As long as the decrees of the government do not conflict with God's Word, we must submissively obey them; if, however, these decrees should order us to do something contrary to God's Word, then we must, as usual, draw near to God in prayer and ask Him to enlighten us through his Holy Spirit, to free us from all error and enable us to suffer in patience, all the while guarding against resentment, anger and envy in one's heart. He who, under these conditions, fears punishment, blows, bonds, imprisonment, the loss of temporal possession, to be separated or torn from father, mother, wife or children, more than God and His Word, of him Jesus says: He is not worthy of me. In Matthew 19:28 Jesus says: Whoever will not leave. . . . We want to pray diligently to the Lord that He, with the power of His suffering and resurrection, as well as the Father and the Holy Spirit, might enter us and quicken us to do His will. To Him be honor and thanks forever! With sincere greetings to you and your loved ones, your friend Jakob Dyk. Neu-Osterwick, October 28, 1846."

2. Second letter. ". . . The following is my well-intentioned opinion of the Scripture verses you mentioned: . . . Let be that which you cannot understand, but seek to transform that which you understand well, with diligent and believing prayer, into action. Then you will be forced to admit that you still know much more than you are practicing. Are you troubled by some of the verses you have mentioned, let me know and we will seek, with the help of God, to explain them. If you give yourself to the Lord, He will, through his Spirit, instruct you how to deal with the school issue in accordance with His will. With greetings from Jakob Dyk, Neu-Osterwick, January 29, 1847."

3. Third letter. "Peace be with you, dear friend in Christ! If you wish to commit yourself to the Lord for time and eternity and through

diligent prayer realize this goal by an appeal to God's grace, then you must properly reckon with the fact that many a contrary storm and much adversity, temptation and anxiety will come your way. . . . As soon as you wish to pray the Devil will initially risk everything he can to keep you from it. Nor can you be saved from this except you sink yourself more deeply each day into Christ and His satisfaction through believing prayer; then your faith will appropriate Christ and all His salvation treasures, then Christ will be in you and you in Him, and He himself will say: If anyone abides in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. Then Christ will also destroy the works of the Devil in you, I John 3:8. Then you will be enabled to overcome the Devil, the world and sin in you through his indwelling. . . . But do not be deceived into believing the error that God will be kindly disposed to you only when you have reached a certain level of godliness and virtue. O no! As soon as the sinner senses his sinfulness, sorrows over his sins and calls on God for mercy and grace, the loving heart of God the Father looks upon us in mercy. The righteousness of Christ is granted to the contrite sinner freely through grace and apart from the works of the law, Rom. 3:24. Nevertheless, a thorough conversion must gradually [?] result in a way of life which will allow people to see who dwells within us and whose spiritual children we are, as we learn to say with Paul: 'I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me,' Gal. 2:20. But before one reaches this point, many a person says: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? I cry, but thou dost not answer me, Ps. 22:2. But—he who endures to the end will be saved, Matt. 24:13. Greetings to you and your dear wife from your friend Jakob Dyk. Neu-Osterwick, February 16, 1847."

4. Fourth letter. "Dear friend and brother in Christ! If by God's grace we have entered upon the narrow way of the cross, have accepted the decision to follow Him, and because of our love to Him have decided to relinquish everything displeasing to Him, then the evil one becomes our determined enemy. We will also be hated by all those who are still outside of Christ, and even though some may remain friendly to us and flatter us for some time, this cannot last long before one recognizes and condemns their malice as well as our own. . . . If we commit ourselves unreservedly to Jesus, and if the evil one realizes that we are deadly serious about following Jesus, then he at least seeks to vex and hinder us, and to make the way to heaven bitter or lead us onto byways where we lack experience. . . . [Compare further: M.B. Church, Chortitza District, 'Kronsweide Revival'!!] When a person has reached the point where he begins to sense God's presence in his life, when energy and will are united within him through the indwelling grace and strengthened by constant prayer to concentrate all our desires and actions to the fulfilling of God's holy and loving will, then the very narrow path despised by our flesh begins to please us exceedingly well. For a conscience cleansed by

the blood of Christ, which the world cannot give us, can only be achieved in this way. . . . But do not understand this to mean that one can immediately live without wounding his conscience; man still stumbles daily. However, the evil which still clings to us and hinders our progress cannot be excused because of this. We must daily flee to Jesus, the open fountain against all sin and uncleanness (Zech. 13:1), not only that our sins be forgiven but that through Him we may become strong to avoid evil and be able to say with Paul: I can do all things through Him who strengthens me, Phil. 4:13. Jakob Dyk, Neu-Osterwick, June 15, 1847."

5. Fifth letter. "Dear friend in Christ! I have received your letter of September 23; the most pleasing thing it contains is your determination to follow Jesus to the end and to renounce all that which is contrary to His holy will. This is also the inevitable outcome of a thorough and honest repentance. It is my heartfelt wish that our Savior Jesus Christ would daily strengthen all of us in this resolve and anoint us with the spirit of grace and prayer in order that this good Holy Spirit might daily move us more and more to prayer, convincing us of its necessity. For we are plagued by a physical body inclined toward wickedness, whose will has been perverted through the fall of Adam and whose mind has been poisoned with worldly desires by the Devil. In spite of the fact that the lusts of the flesh and its cravings, as well as honor, reputation, magnificence and glory cannot in truth quiet, satiate or refresh our soul, it must live in this prison; for even though it may take pleasure in some things for a few moments, it soon becomes restless again since it comes from God and can find no rest outside of Him and His love either in time or eternity. Yet, nearly everyone continues to try to satisfy his noble soul by throwing the husks of this world, which we mentioned above—as well as others, its way; and the person who will not seek to satiate his lusts, inclinations and desires, honor and reputation, at this hog's trough with them, is hated and envied. Nevertheless it is he who is blessed; for he can the more easily free himself and arise, like the prodigal son, to return to the father than the person who is still flirting with the idea, or is still being coaxed and tempted to return to the trough, where quarreling over the husks continues and the weaker are crowded out by the stronger. What wretchedness, what misery, what blindness the poor man betrayed by the Devil is enmeshed in. And what is even worse is that he feels quite comfortable in this condition of spiritual death, a condition, which if persisted in, leads inevitably to eternal death or damnation. Therefore, dear friend, seek to love Jesus Christ above all else and to obtain the forgiveness of sins through the merit of His blood. Pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who grounds your heart in God, and seek to order your whole life in accordance with your calling. We will not lay a good foundation if we rely too heavily upon the advice of others since it is only of the letter; for St. Paul says: It is good that the heart

be firmly established. Avoid becoming too concerned about how best to approach this or that, for you will never do things perfectly. Just take everything that depresses and weighs down upon you as best you can to God in prayer, then all your endeavors will eventually turn out well for you, even though it may appear otherwise. You will become rich in experience. Neither bare your heart to everyone who appears pious to you: it can only cause unrest. I seek everything in Jesus and strive to become more enlightened and constantly more alive in Him who is the true light and life. Outside of him I am a sinner worthy of condemnation, capable only of stumbling and straying. If I desire or indeed accomplish any good, it is the Lord Christ who does it in me. Submit yourselves whole-heartedly to Him! We shall not regret it in heaven even though tribulation may prick us as we follow Him here. If we endure, we shall reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us. The grace of our Lord Jesus, the Love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you! Jakob Dyk. Neu-Osterwick, October 23, 1847."

May we remember these letters when we read the chapter concerning the founding of the M.B. Church in Chortitza later on in order to hear "both sides!"

VI. *The Development of the Church in the Midst of the Molotschna Mennonite Brotherhood to 1860*
(Supplement to *#35ff*)

A. The Reason for the Founding of the *Kleine Gemeinde*. (Supplement to *#35 & 36*). §58

The reasons for the creation of this fellowship, its aims and characteristics, can be discerned from the following autobiography of Klaas Reimer, its founder and first elder. This document not only describes the *Kleine Gemeinde* but also the general conditions among the South Russian Mennonites during and after the immigration, and also, retrospectively, of the Prussian Mennonites. The document at our disposal is a very poor copy which has come to us from the *Kleine Gemeinde*. Here it is given in condensed form using current orthography.

a) Reimer writes: "In 1798 at the age of twenty-eight, because of my marriage, I moved from Petershagen [in Prussia], near Danzig, to the village of Neuenhuben, approximately forty kilometers from my birthplace. It was the late Elder Peter Epp's daughter that I married. Three years after her father's death, the rural members of the congregation separated themselves from those in the city, but only to the extent that the elder from Danzig had to serve them with baptism and communion. Other than that they had no association with him. . . . They consisted of approximately one-hundred communicants. . . . On February

1, 1801, they held an election and I, though uneducated, was called quite unexpectedly to the ministry. . . . I could not decline, for I wanted to serve God as faithfully as I could. Many times it became a heavy burden for me and I became discouraged. And yet the words of Paul: It is the foolish things of this world that God has chosen, were fulfilled. [A portion is left out.]

b) "It soon became evident that the temple would not be cleansed nor would the breach be filled; for the Danzig elder, being very liberal, got into a quarrel with the others, though not even all these were in agreement. And since no improvement could be expected in Prussia, that is in Danzig, some thirty adults from our congregation left this desolate Babel on August 23, 1804, and on November 27 arrived in the old Chortitza Colony. There we met our brethren in a somewhat poor condition, which was pleasing to me. Shortly thereupon repeated requests came to Elder Johann Wiebe to come to Molotschna. Four of us went: Jakob Ens,[52] Jakob Dyk,[53] Johann Wiebe[53] and I. When we arrived, we found a great deal of dissension [which had arisen out of petty civil disagreements]. Three times the feuding parties were called together, discussing the issues from mid-day to midnight but nothing was resolved. In the meantime the election of ministers and elders was held. [Another gap; Reimer and Enns settled in the Molotschna. Jakob Enns became the elder. Severe quarrels arose regarding civil punishments and Enns' inadequate church discipline, as well as because of Enns' violent and sudden temper which embittered relations between himself and Reimer.] God directs everything, as the example of Israel attests. As long as Israel appeared governable, God provided judges who saved her from her enemies. But when there was little hope of this, God at times sent them wicked kings, as can be seen in the case of King Ahab. . . .

c) "And because those of us, who would not submit ourselves completely to this terrible elder, constituted only a small group, some men from Muensterberg [a village on the Molotschna] came to us and invited us to conduct services every fourteen days in Muensterberg as well as here [in private homes; about 1812; Reimer lived in Petershagen near Halbstadt, Molotschna]; and that without Enns' consent. But we were kept from doing this because others threatened to drive us out of Muensterberg with blows. When this availed them nothing, they denounced us to the local authorities [the local Mennonite administration]. . . . Thereupon we explained the entire matter, as well as God's Word, to them. At that the Colony Administrator (Oberschulz) fell silent. [The repeated attempts at reconciliation on both the religious and civil level failed time and again because of Enns' hot-tempered outbursts.]

d) "Then the time arrived when God wanted to separate us; for to this point we had still participated in the communion service. Through

the power of God I still clung to that which he had given me, though I was nearly totally confused in regard to many other matters. For it is not within the power of man to leave a church when he cannot find sanctuary in another; his pride will not allow it. As Menno Simons says, nothing displeases Satan more than to see people leave the [false] church, take the exercise of discipline, by means of the ban and in accordance with the Word of God, seriously, and confess His Word before men. . . . For I know what it has cost me both here and in Prussia. Read John 12:42. But once we began to stay away from communion, we severed our relations with the church completely. Thereupon Jakob Enns called a meeting of the ministers and elders of the old colony [Chortitza] where we were asked whether or not we wished to give in. But when we refused to concede anything, Johann Wiebe [the Chortitza elder] took us aside and confronted us with a number of issues. When even this had no effect upon us, we returned to the larger meeting where Johann Wiebe said the following to the two of us [Reimer's supporter was a minister by the name of Cornelius Janzen]: According to the Scripture you men are quite right, but we cannot follow it in this manner. One thing I want to tell you, however, if you persist in this attitude it may well happen that you will be sent to Siberia. I tell you this in order that it will not appear strange to you later on. O, what a heart-rending pity! For, instead of saying: According to God's Word you are right; stand firm so no one may rob you of your crown, Rev. 3, he wanted to use Siberia to frighten us. From this it is apparent to what extent their teachers were non-resistant Christians; for false teachers have always treated right-thinking Christians in this manner, attempting to persuade them with such remonstrances. And when all of this failed, these false teachers tortured the others with bonds and imprisonment to the point of death, as would have happened here had God not intervened in a remarkable way. [Later, Klaas Wiens, a former colony administrator and now member of the colonial administration in Ekaterinoslav—the "Comptoir"; afterwards, when it had been moved to Odessa, the "Supervisory Commission"—crushed the serious danger which was threatening Reimer and his comrade because of Enns' hostile representatives, by an honest and impartial presentation, whereupon the board sent a stern reprimand to Enns. Heinrich Janzen, Schoenwiese, the Frisian elder of the Kronsweide Church, baptized the candidates they brought him in 1814. . . .]

e) "After a while he [Janzen] came and administered the Lord's Supper to us in accordance with our Flemish custom. We petitioned him for an elder, but he was not yet inclined since he wanted to return again later. When he returned he cast the lot between me and Cornelius Janzen; and though I was inexperienced and unqualified, the lot fell to me. Nevertheless, I sought to be content with my lot for I could see it only as the will of God. Although we repeatedly requested ordination,

Janzen refused to comply because of the great opposition to such a move, as we learned later. That was in 1815. We waited until 1816 for ordination, in the meantime, we studied the Bible and many other writings. Thus we discovered that Menno Simons had probably never received ordination. [That is an error. According to many reliable historical sources, Menno Simons was ordained by Obbe Philips, the brother of Dirk Philips and a former Catholic priest, who was an Anabaptist elder or bishop. But Menno appealed to it as little as he appealed to his Catholic ordination as presbyter or priest, preferring to appeal rather to his calling by the 'godly.' Compare above #4, e, footnote.] Even Heinrich Janzen of Schoenwiese was ordained, as is reported, by a minister, Cornelius Warkentin. [Wrong! C. Warkentin was ordained by Elder Regier before his death. See above.] So I too accepted it, and Cornelius Janzen ordained me as the elder of our small congregation ['about 18 or 20 brethren'] with an ordination sermon before the congregation. Thereupon I, though very unworthy, served our small congregation with baptism and the Lord's Supper. Jakob Enns and Johann Wiebe, however, held a meeting with their ministers where it was decided that if those, whom I had baptized, wanted to join them, they would have to be baptized again.

f) "In 1819, Elder Franz Goerz [the first Rudnerweider] came from Prussia, and when he had arrived we visited him, seeking whether he possessed the true faith. But we had no sooner begun our discussion with him when we arrived at the millennium, when people would beat their spears into pruning hooks and their swords into plowshares . . . as he read in Isaiah chapter 2. When I saw his error, my spirit became zealous to convert Goerz, and I said: Do you know the book called *Wandelnde Seele* (Wandering Soul)? [an old Anabaptist book]. . . . He answered: Yes. Then I said: Then you will know what it says of those words. Two more times he spoke to us in an effort to draw us into this terrible error. Later Peter Wedel [Alexanderwohl] came [from Prussia] with his ministers. . . . He moved in with me. . . . All of them tried to persuade me to come to their services; they would even order the service the way I wanted it. But I spoke to them on a number of issues, and finally it came to the point where they asked me whether or not I rejected all other nations [he means confessions]? Because they pressed me hard for an answer, I told them that I believed that all those who justified infant baptism, the swearing of oaths, and war could not be true Christians no matter how holy they may otherwise appear. At this the elder jumped from his chair and said: Man, you are making a terrible statement which cannot stand! No appeal to the Scriptures helped me, and I regretted having made so strong a statement until I had the occasion to read an even stronger one to him out of the writings of Peter Peters [an old Anabaptist author], a statement far more terrible than my own . . . and then I was satisfied! O God, how terrible it is now that

Satan, in the guise of an angel of light, is free to deceive! Yet he deceives only those who will not listen to the Word of God. The two elders Goerz and Wedel taught diligently in our churches, indeed spoke much of love and peace while opposing the severity exercised by the authorities . . . for everything pointed to the imminent inauguration of the millennium. [He elaborates on the quarrels between those of Ohrloff and Lichtenau, which destroyed all hopes for peace. Elder Wedel becomes president of the Bible Society[54] which Reimer regards as terrible. New threats of removal to Siberia and the like are now made against the *Kleine Gemeinde* by the civil authorities, the colony administration, and higher officials such as General Insow, whereby it would appear that the elders Wedel, Goerz, and B. Fast, provoked by Klaas Reimer's stubborness, did not act completely honorably.] But I was neither afraid nor would I give in, for what God has established no man can destroy. God has dealt with us Mennonites in accordance with Zechariah 13. . . .

g) "When I wanted to leave Prussia [which was very difficult for him] . . . because Danzig had become a desolate Babel, . . . and also because my father-in-law, Elder Peter Epp, had often said on his sick-bed: Children, you must go to Russia, for the Mennonites here are done for,—I too thought to myself that God might perhaps raise up his small flock in Russia. But alas, when I arrived here I found that terribly hot-tempered elder and everything in a state of confusion. Thus, even here, after many years, I had to leave the church, which for me was very difficult. God, however, directed everything toward this end. And so there we were, about eighteen or twenty brethren. . . . Then God began to purify us because our number had increased, and with the increase the false spirit, like an angel of light, had entered our midst and become our upright brother, so that he might, as Menno Simons says, seat himself among the saints, receive communion with them, wash their feet and be an earnest and very helpful, virtuous spirit. . . . But when we refused to be attracted to the world, he appeared amongst us in the guise of a pharisaical holiness, which was more frightening than his earlier form. Had God not worked in our midst with great power, we should have fallen to a worse state than we had earlier been in Babel. Consider the wondrous ways of God for he will reveal the foolishness of the evil spirits in due time. [One of his co-workers becomes 'proud and defiant,' returns to the 'church' where he falls into disgrace because of immorality. . . .] Thereafter Satan approached us with many hypocritical matters through his servants B. R., K. F., even H. W. and M. W. These formulated disgusting religious practices. B. R., for example, made extremely long prayers and would often spend long periods of time during the night lying in a ditch or by a street, either at home or in strange villages, nearly naked, writing and praying loudly. Indeed, he reorganized and lengthened the Lord's Prayer to suit his fancy. If they could not weep while saying grace at table, they would leave the table and not eat the

food set before them, eat only poor food or go hungry, and then, during the winter time, go and lie nearly naked in the ditches. On one such occasion R.'s brother died. K. F. desired that we should be conspicuously plain before others, have no fellowship with anyone but ourselves, fill no office [a principle they have more or less adhered to],[55] not pass on any letter from the colony administration, and hold all things in common. . . . M. W. became ill, and when he had recovered he said that it had been revealed to his spirit that the world would be destroyed in the summer; he also spoke forcefully from the Bible so that many people were filled with fear and dread. I knew that everything that did not fully agree with the Word of God was not of God. But what was it? I was too careless, too unobservant; I did not study God's Word or pray enough to receive enlightenment, wisdom and power. . . . But when the aforementioned W. came up with his false wisdom—for he had postulated a date and said how terrible the burning, banging and crackling would be—he came to me with a number of my brethren and some others. Because I paid no heed to his prophecies, he applied the following words of Jesus to me: Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven man, but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, etc. I was opposed to much of this and so prepared a sermon on John 13:35. In my weakness I delivered it in love to God stating that according to Rev. 22:18, 19, we should not add or take anything away from God's Word or concern our consciences about things not grounded in Scripture. Sad to say, however, this created a great deal of strife among us. . . . In response, I prepared a sermon on Matt. 12:43-45. This, because of our blindness only made matters worse. . . . There was such a terrible blindness in our midst concerning the ban that it was impossible for God, under these conditions, to give us the victory over our enemy. Thereupon, I prepared another message, this one for the church members' meeting . . . taken from Menno Simons, Peter Peters and the speeches of several martyrs, in which they expressed their views concerning that which was to be established among us. . . . As I was delivering this sermon to the brethren, H. W. grasped his cap and said: 'That is wrong,' and walked out. Nearly everyone followed him. That seemed to be the end of everything, for I could not acknowledge their self-proclaimed holiness, and without such a concession they were prepared to reject me. [He is again recognized as elder; but how the matter ran its course can not be clearly understood. . . .] Then I spoke once again emphasizing the new, and God worked mighty wonders in our midst, convicting the hearts of the foolish so that they were compelled to confess their great shame, indeed more than that, as Paul says, such as is not found even among the pagans; and that not only one, as in Joshua's time, but more than two or three among the few of us. And God gave strength to discipline in accordance with His Word. Nevertheless,

one cannot eradicate the spirit of Achan entirely because he remains hidden until God reveals him. . . .

h) "I must go back once more; for when we had become a separate congregation it was our desire willingly to serve God in all simplicity and keep all His commandments as Jesus had instructed His disciples in Matt. 28. As a consequence, Jesus' command to wash one another's feet, which He both taught and practiced as an act of love, thus became very important to us, especially since he had very urgently commended it to us four times. The Frisians and Flemish had rejected it for many years [though not all: the old Flemish, Alexanderwohl and Gnadenfeld, practiced it continuously]. And since we became more and more convinced that we should adopt the practice—this was approximately in 1826—the words of the author in the *Martyr's Mirror* were fulfilled where he spoke: Where God erects a temple, Satan seeks to destroy it. But God purified us, . . . and so we adopted the loving practice and intend, God willing, to retain it. . . ." [It appears to be Reimer's opinion that the renewal of the practice of footwashing among other things produced spiritual pride which in turn led to the confusion described above. We are not in possession of the conclusion of the document.]

i) Aside from a few handwritten documents from inside the *Kleine Gemeinde,* which add nothing new to the characterization of this church, we possess a small printed booklet of some forty pages entitled: *Eine Einfache Erklaerung ueber einige Glaubenssaetze der sogenannten Kleinen Gemeinde* (A Simple Explanation of a few Dogmas of the so-called Kleine Gemeinde). "Written by a well-intentioned, faithful servant of the Word of the Lord [Abraham Friesen] in 1845, Danzig, and published by the Gerhard Press." Abraham Friesen later became elder[56] of this church. The booklet is an energetic defense of the secession and the church's unique position. The language is much clearer, indicating a better education; but the spirit that pervades the whole is that of Reimer. The numerous references to Anabaptist authors are interesting. Aside from Menno Simons, the following are named: "elder" Peter Peters as the author of *Der Weg nach Friedensstadt* (The Way to the City of Peace); the Confessions of Faith by George Hansen and Hans van Steen; P. Janzen Twiscks; *Maertyrerbuecher* by T. J. van Braght; *Der Spiegel der Gerechtigkeit von einem Aeltesten Duerk Philipps von 1578* (The Mirror of Righteousness by an Elder, Dirk Philips), by Menno's co-worker and in the Dutch language, whose appearance in German is anticipated. They enjoyed reading these books in the Dutch language, but also translated into German and circulated many of the old Anabaptist writings. (*Weg nach Friedensstadt, Die Wandelnde Seele.*) A letter from Elder Bernhard Fast and a response by Abraham Friesen among others are contained in the conclusion.

k) "To the Rev. Abraham Friesen *et consortes* [and associates]: In response to your petition to provide you with a formally ordained elder and thereby create a regular church, we give you the following information. Recently you yourself informed us that it was not your intention to help to establish and support our church order. On the contrary, you were concerned to oppose it, which could only result in disorder. In such a case, we ourselves would be to blame had we aided and abetted your intentions and our church order would have been weakened. We can neither wish nor do this; instead we hope and counsel you with total sincerity to give up your partisan spirit and formally join one of the established congregations, helping to build and counsel it in a communal spirit. Such a development would be a hopeful sign for the future, and we could with one voice pray the Father in heaven for the blessing He has promised us.

"In the hope that you will act on our desire and accept our counsel we remain, with kindest greetings, in the name of my co-workers,

Halbstadt, February 23, 1838 Bernhard Fast, Elder."

1) The shortsightedness of Elder Fast never ceases to amaze one: here he shows himself to be the same person he was in the Gnadenfeld matter; but in his "Letter to the Elders and Ministers of Prussia" [cf. below], his dealings with the Moravian bishops (**#60**), with the evangelical missionaries and the matters relating to the M.B. Church of 1860, he was a different person. To assume such an air of superiority over against the ***Kleine Gemeinde*** proved useless, and his rejection of a potential ally, which the ***Kleine Gemeinde*** would undoubtedly have become had her wish been fulfilled, brought great injury. Ohrloff's penalty was conclusive isolation until 1860. Despite that fact, the ***Kleine Gemeinde*** has friendlier relations with those of Ohrloff, as one can see from the "brotherhood question," than with anyone else. It should be noted further that through the energetic defence of her independence, the ***Kleine Gemeinde*** blazed the trail for the M.B. Church, whose most closely related Mennonite sister church she has become in the form of the Krimmer M.B. Church in the United States, which is a deepened and improved extension of the old ***Kleine Gemeinde***.

m) A. Friesen's skillfull answer, radically condensed, follows: "To the Rev. Elder Bernhard Fast, and all his co-workers! We wish that much grace, salvation and blessing from the boundless fullness of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen.

"Although we received your letter of February 23 with the deepest of anticipation, we nevertheless noted in it a negative response to our wish and heart's desire, which saddens and humbles us deeply in our present state, all the more so since you view our cause with such suspicion and deny our request without attempting to convince us, from

the Scriptures, of our errors. However, we comfort ourselves with the words: 'For the Lord will not forsake His people. . . .' Ps. 94:14, 15. [A bone of contention between the two was the matter of attestations which the traditional church required of those coming to her from the *Kleine Gemeinde*, but which the latter refused, declaring that it bound their consciences. Because of this the *Kleine Gemeinde* was accused of creating 'disorder.'] Finally you earnestly advise us to depart from all partisanship and join an organized congregation. . . . How is it possible, beloved, that you so earnestly advise us to join an organized congregation? Do you not know that much uncleanness and disgrace lies hidden there and that a little leaven will leaven the whole lump? I Cor. 5:6. Do you not notice a greater spirit of partisanship in the organized congregations than in ours? [Cf. further: 'Lichtenau' and 'Heinrich Wiens.'] And where, in such a setting, would be that united building to which you advise us? Do you not, on the contrary, experience a violent sense of indignation and antipathy toward all the human ordinances in those formal congregations, for which, according to your own statement, you have neither help nor solution? [The *Kleine Gemeinde* eagerly co-operated with the Agricultural Society; her members were excellent although very simple farmers, a fact the Lichtenau Church, among others, viewed as manifesting an anti-Christian spirit.] Be assured, beloved, that we will no longer submit to all of this nor will we fellowship with the unproductive works of darkness (Eph., 5:11), since God has persuaded us to something different. And even though we should never attain to the stature of a formal congregation here on earth, we shall be content to live in the grace of God and His fellowship in order, eventually, through grace to attain eternal salvation.

"And since you have irrevocably denied us our desire we find ourselves compelled to submit ourselves to our brethren and await, as God wills and we live, an opportune moment when an election can be held. The ordination, however, we leave to you and your good judgment.

"For the rest we remain with friendly greetings your unimportant fellow servants

Abraham Friesen, Heinrich Balzer,
Peter Penner, Klaas Friesen, Isaak Loewen.
Ohrloff, March 12, 1838."

B. *The Cause of the Withdrawal of the Lichtenau or "large" Congregation* (Supplement to *#37*] §59

a) The following letter, contained in a little booklet, written by Tobias Voth and addressed to the elders, ministers and brethren in Christ living in Prussia, shows clearly what was at stake in the withdrawal in the "large" Lichtenau congregation from the Ohrloff

mother church, that is, from Elder Bernhard Fast. That Voth, who is the probable author, wrote the letter on behalf of Bernhard Fast, his like-minded ministers, and the elders Franz Goerz, Rudnerweide, and Peter Wedel, Alexanderwohl, is indicated, along with the date, in the text. (1822-1855: Tobias Voth lived in Ohrloff, where he began to teach during the reign of Alexander I, who died in 1825.) The date of the letter and the signatures are missing.

b) "Honorable and highly esteemed elders, ministers and brethren in Christ! We have looked forward with heartfelt anticipation to the time when we should receive one of your dear letters. We have not waited in vain, for on the 23rd of this month (according to the old calendar) we received a letter from you dated February 27, of the current year. From it we are distressed to see that four of our honorable ministers, Johann Friessen [sic], David Hiebert, Jakob Warkentin and Franz Wienz [sic] and many other brethren have complained about us: 1) concerning missionary Moritz's participation in the Lord's Supper, 2) concerning the Bible Society existing here, and 3) concerning the so-called secondary school the above-named ministers and their adherents have established. From your letter, dear colleagues, we have also discerned your well-meaning advice as to how these matters may be rectified.

c) "Concerning the participation of the dear p.[57] Moritz at the Lord's Supper, you say we have no right to extend the Lord's Supper to alien believers, but only to those who share the faith. Already in our earlier letter we explained how Elder 'Ohm' Bernhard Fast had arrived at this position. But now we add that we are of the same opinion, and that when the Lord's Supper was extended to the dear p. Moritz, 'Ohm' Fast believed him, in basic issues, to share our faith, for according to the Scriptures we are certainly all of one faith if we seek to become righteous before God through the reconciling grace of Christ and live a life that leads to this goal. Because 'Ohm' Bernhard Fast was convinced of this with regard to p. Moritz, and because he believed that the congregation would not take offense, he made an exception in his case. You, dear elders and colleagues, advise that 'Ohm' Bernhard Fast declare publicly that this will never happen again in order to make peace from our side possible. This was done publicly in the Ohrloff Church even before we and the four above-named ministers sent our last letter off to you. Had these four ministers and their adherents been the kind who could have been calmed by such promises, they would not again have complained to you about it. Oh how gladly would 'Ohm' Bernhard Fast again and again declare before the church never again to extend the Lord's Supper to any but Mennonites; truth to say, however, a very unique spirit of unrest has taken root here and would have manifested itself even if the Lord's Supper had not been extended to p. Moritz. Before ever we saw p. Moritz we had sensed this spirit quite distinctly; and although, in our

weakness, we immediately did battle with it, it has nevertheless remained. It is the Lord who must destroy it. Had a spirit of love and peace been present in the church, these four ministers would gladly have forgiven 'Ohm' Bernhard Fast and his adherents, for he is far from extending the Lord's Supper any longer to anyone who does not wear the outward appearance of a Mennonite. Of this the entire congregation can be and is assured, if only it does not deliberately suppress this conviction.

d) "The above-named four ministers and numerous brethren have written you, with regard to the Bible Society, that we have, against their will and advice, written to St. Petersburg, persisting in our request for permission. It is inconceivable to us that they could say such a thing since the situation is quite different. It stands thus: When the council of ministers met on this matter and reached the point at which permission had to be requested, it came to the conclusion that the elders and several of the brethren should write to St. Petersburg for authorization. Neither the four ministers nor the brethren raised any objections to this; only when everything was completed and the statutes had arrived did they speak out against it. But by then it was obviously too late. And as far as the titles of president, director, etc., are concerned, let it be said that these have never been adopted by us, for we call our officers by their German designations, such as *Vorsitzer* (chairman), *Beisitzer* (vice chairman), *Rechnungsfuehrer* (treasurer), and *Schriftfuehrer* (secretary). The opponents of the Bible Society submit to you that these titles, which we do not even use, are the cause for their separation. Here they do not give this as their reason, but argue that the word *Verein* (society) should be abolished because it ties us to other religious groups and this will make us subject to military service. They said the same in 'Ohm' Fast's very home before the budget advisor and Lord Contenius who, irritated by such remarks, raised his snuff-box to the sky and said: The two are as little related as my snuff-box and the moon. From your condescending letter it also becomes apparent that these four ministers, etc., are also supposed to have said that, in spite of the fact that the Bible Society has to be supported by a correspondence society and liberal contributions, we nevertheless wrote to St. Petersburg requesting confirmation for a Bible Society. Never before have they mentioned this; only now, that the Bible Society has long been in existence, do they declare this. In the meantime, only German Bibles are to be sent out and distributed. Had this been mentioned earlier, we should gladly have followed the advice, even though we have learned from experience that little or nothing would have been done for the Bible Society, for once, at the instigation of Lord Pinkerton, the St. Petersburg Bible Society sent us over 500 Bibles and 200 Testaments to sell, some of which are still in stock although it is five years later. Everyone knows only too well how indifferently such work

would be carried on without a Bible Society, since no one then has responsibility. Nevertheless, we would have complied had someone insisted on a correspondence society. But we are convinced that the enemy, an adversary of quiet orderliness, would not have rested until he had come forth with another excuse to disturb the peace. Many now seemed to settle down somewhat. The Bible Society grew with time, sizeable contributions came in, and since August 27 of last year already . . . Bibles and Testaments to the value of . . . rubles . . . kopeks [gaps in the original] have been sold and distributed, indicating very clearly that God's grace and blessing rest on this endeavor. It is natural that the enemy should exert all his energy to destroy this project. We have examined our motives for establishing the Bible Society amid prayer and entreaties, and will continue to do so: whether it was done out of a pure love for the dissemination of God's Word to the salvation of mankind, or if the desire for titles and honor led us? But thanks be to God, who tests the hearts of men, and before whom nothing is concealed and whom no one can deceive, that we are convinced even if only in the weakness of our feelings that we have not set up a Bible Society because of a desire for fame or any other impure motive. Understand us aright, dear colleagues, we do not wish to boast. We know well how prone to failure the heart is even in doing good, and that this applies equally to us; at the same time we also know and are experiencing that God's spirit chastises every man who strives to serve the Lord and his fellow man, and confronts him with every offense and sin. And yet, with regard to the Bible Society, we are at rest and at peace insofar as we can judge the motives out of which it grew. What does fill us with deep distress, however, is that the enemy is using this holy work to create strife, a work which can certainly not have any influence upon changes in matters of state, freedom of conscience, or detrimental effects upon rights and privileges, but which will influence the spread of the saving Gospel and by means of which we partially fulfill the command of Christ when he says: Go and preach the Gospel to every creature. When we consider the results that have been achieved by the Bible Society, we are forced to confess that the Lord has done great things. Many Christians and heathen, etc., have come, through it and under the direction of God, to a knowledge of the truth. That would not have happened had it been a society that had either been created from or drawn upon impure sources. Our Savior says: by their fruit you shall know them. And if we recognize that this Bible Society, as well as the others, was created out of pure motives, that they have their benevolent function, and that nothing would be improved by its dissolution—then why should we dissolve it? Those who love peace will readily unite themselves with us, and we with them, regardless of this. Whoever wishes, need not join the Bible Society: he will remain our dear friend and brother nevertheless, as long as he lives as much as possible

according to God's Word, even though it be in weakness as in our case. Should we dissolve the Bible Society in line with your well-meaning advice, we would offend those who desire it. And if one considers the consequences which would result from a dissolution, even that appears to us to be filled with danger, namely: through printed reports all existing Bible Societies know that a Bible Society has been organized here. And what would they say were we to close ours; would it not offend many members and hinder a good cause? Furthermore, Count Galizyn supports the Bible Society with great zeal. What would he say? Would he remain silent? We think not! [An illegible correction in the manuscript: 'The Lord C . . .']. Could it not come to an investigation? And how would these Mennonite colonies stand that? These reasons would be no more acceptable than those which the financial advisor and Lord Contenius rejected from the four above-named ministers with the words: 'You just do not want to. You are proud!' Because these Bible Societies are viewed by our respected and most gracious Tsar Alexander [the first], as well as by the entire main Russian Bible Society, as so important we dare not set our hand to their dissolution: we believe—and not we alone—that we would put our colony in extreme danger and not improve our internal situation with such an action. [That was introducing politics into church affairs!] Had you, dear elders and ministers, said in your present letter what you said about the Bible Societies in your previous one, we believe it would have produced noble results. Many occasions, too numerous to relate here, have led us to believe this. And since you, dear elders and colleagues, were with our Bible Society earlier and defended it, as is clearly evident from your letter of August 29, of last year, but now advise us to change our Bible Society into a correspondence society, that is, are now against the Bible Society, your two positions cancel each other out. We have now informed you in greater detail about the situation which should aid you in arriving at a better conclusion. It is our hope and the hope of many brethren that you, upon closer examination, will make recommendations to the four ministers and their adherents here in accordance with your earlier views, indeed it is our brotherly request that you do so. It is known to you, as we mentioned in our last letter, that the Chortitza 'Ohms' (elders) have been here but accomplished nothing; we would invite them back if anything could be accomplished by it. Nevertheless, we hope that your and the dear elders' further loving counsel will always result in a few souls being won.

e) "Finally, in regard to the school in Ohrloff, whereof the four ministers and numerous brethren, who wish to have their children instructed by Mennonite teachers and to exclude those of other confessions from the colony, have written you, we are forced to respond that no one is forced to send his children to this school, for everyone may decide for himself who is to instruct his child. Those who have concerns

in this regard should therefore calm themselves. Nevertheless, we are surprised that you harbor so many fears; for we will not dismiss our present teacher [Tobias Voth], who is of the Mennonite faith, and appoint a Lutheran, even though most [the word "most" is crossed out and "many" written over it] of the teachers in our colony are Lutheran [i.e. in the village schools]. And the fact that people of other faiths may not settle among us, can have nothing to do with the school, as any unprejudiced and objective person will recognize on his own. What is more, the ministers have never examined the school and cannot say with any certainty whether or not it imparts instruction contrary to our Mennonite principles. However, thanks be to God that the prejudices are constantly decreasing. Many opponents, who have gone to investigate the school, have invariably returned with a changed opinion, confessing that their earlier judgment had been quite wrong. Of this there is ample evidence. We have ourselves been to the school a number of times and know of a certainty that its main concern is to win the children for Jesus. Nor can the positive results achieved with the children be denied. Should one observe the children in the absence of the teacher, one will find them to be quiet, calm and introspective. When the children are dismissed from school, most of them are serious and act in such a manner as to give evidence of improvement. Everyone who has a taste for Christianity notes this with considerable joy. The teacher also conducts an evening session with the children, beginning at 6 o'clock and often lasting until 9, to which adults come from far and wide. On most winter evenings more adults than children have been in attendance, and, as we have been informed, virtually everyone returns home determined to support the school. We are not aware of the fact that this is supposed to be a secondary school. We call it simply the school of the School Society, and we intend that the school shall serve no other purpose than to bring up the children in the true fear of God so that they may become good and useful citizens of our colony under God's blessing. Accordingly only those subjects are taught which will be useful to the farmer, such as reading, arithmetic, singing and writing, enabling them to put their thought down on paper. These are all harmless matters, and to the extent that the opponents of the school and Bible Society will investigate the matter, they will find it good. We hope that the Lord will open everyone's eyes and allow the light of His Holy Spirit to illuminate their inner being.

f) "And now, dear colleagues, we have described the situation somewhat more accurately to you. It is regrettable that this was not done sooner; for we hope that, had we done so, your kind letter would have been written in the same vein as the earlier one and that an irrevocable decision regarding the matter on your part, insofar as such a thing is humanly possible, would have quieted all dispositions. We beg you most

earnestly to make one more attempt to calm the restless by means of correction in order to restore, as much as possible, a general state of peace and love. For the rest, we feel ourselves united with you by bonds of deep and heartfelt love, and hope to labor unceasingly with you and do everything for which the Lord wants to use us. We commend ourselves to your loving memory and intercession before the Lord, and in as much as the Lord enables and gives us grace, we will do the same. The God of love and peace be with you and us! Amen." [The schism of the church was not to be stopped. See above ##37-42. Also compare ##61 & 61 (2).]

C. *The Molotschna Mennonite Brotherhood's Connections with the Moravian Brethren and the Evangelical Missionaries* (Supplement to ##37-42) §60

a) Many will be interested to discover that the group of elders—Bernhard Fast, Ohrloff, Peter Wedel, Alexanderwohl, and Franz Goerz, Rudnerweide, as well as the teacher Tobias Voth and his associates—corresponded with the bishops of the Moravian Brethren (compare above *#13*n), as the following letter, personally copied and authenticated by the late Jakob Reimer (Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld) in 1837, demonstrates: "The following letter was received by Tobias Voth from Bishop Gottlob Martin Schneider of the Brethren Church on March 21, 1828."

b) Berthelsdorf, June 30, 1827

"Beloved brother in the Lord!

"It was only on June 22, of this year that I received your kind letter written from Ohrloff on September 3, of last year, together with the ten silver rubles widow's mite for our mission,[58] which the giver of all good and perfect gifts may bless, as well as all who contributed to it, and allow it to become a fund which will continue to bring forth new gifts. Enclosed is a copy of the 'Church News' for 1825. We again greet Elders Fast and Goerz most warmly and heartily. Our missionary work progresses with God's blessing; the new field in Friedrichtsthal on the southern tip of Greenland, the new field Kopenton in the heart of Jamaica, the new field Tabor in Barbados, and the revived mission there require a great deal of work as well as inevitable expenditures. Last year we saw messengers from the heathen of Greenland and Labrador here. Missionaries on furlough from the West Indies, Labrador and Greenland, whose stories grip the hearts and minds of the friends of mission, are to be found at Herrnhut. The time in which we live, dear brother, is like a head with two faces: one bright as the sun and beaming lovingly without blinding, the other dark as the night yet attractive to its own enemies and the friends of lies. Consequently there exists a pro and con, a fighting and quarreling as seldom before! Nevertheless, He who

determines all things and through His blood has already brought forth an immense amount of fruit, must retain the field at the end. We are celebrating two centennial celebrations here in the brotherhood: on August 13—the great communion service in Berthelsdorf of 1727, and in the same year the revival among the children. Oh, that fire would proceed from His mouth to purify His temple at this time! The brotherhood directorate [the highest ecclesiastical authority of the Moravian Brethren consisting of nine elders or bishops] greets all the loved ones in Ohrloff and the surrounding area, and blesses[59] them in the Lord. Pray for us as we pray for you! We remain bound through the blood of Jesus, especially to you. Your loving brother, Gottlob Martin Schneider."

c) Those named above also associated with other Christian ministers and missionaries. Thus we saw earlier (*#59,c*) that communion had been extended to the missionary Moritz. On July 27, 1825, a missionary named Saltet[60] from Tiflis (probably a member of the Basel group) writes to "Brother Bernhard Fast, elder of the Mennonites in Molotschna, resident in Halbstadt." He mentions a letter from the previous year, exhorts the "honest brothers and sisters to hold fast to what they have in Christ," encourages them to strive for unity, to admonish the "faithless"—Lichtenau had already broken with them—and to educate the children. Further, he commends Wolf, the missionary to the Jews and bearer of the letter to them. He exhorts the "beloved brothers and sisters in the Molotschna and Chortitza congregations" to pray for him [he had probably made contact with Jakob Dyk, Sr., here, see his letter above]; "to greet those among the Wuerttemberg brothers and sisters [cf. below,'Pastor Wuest,' #72] who are in Christ and not to quarrel over differing opinions. Nor did I have any desire to quarrel with you; rather I embraced the upright ones amongst you in cordial love and refreshed myself with them in Jesus. . . . The grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you! Amen.

"I add a special greeting to you and yours, my dear Fast, and commend myself to your brotherly prayers before the throne of grace.

Your fellow brother Saltet [Sallat?]
Tiflis, July 27, 1825."

d) As many of the older generation will still remember, Schlatter, the Swiss missionary to the Nogai and son of the well-known song writer, Anna Schlatter, often associated with the group around Bernhard Fast. During this time Ohrloff, Rudnerweide and Alexanderwohl were as bold and free in their emphasis on the "universal Christian church, the fellowship of the saints," without ecclesiastical barriers, as Gnadenfeld was later. It is regrettable that the local peace not only suffered necessary but also unnecessary evil disturbances!

D. *Farewell Sermon of the Exiled Margenau Elder Heinrich Wiens, 1847* (Supplement to *#37*) §61

a) In the midst of these disturbances we have arrived at a reading of this tract which acquaints us with Heinrich Wiens, the most important champion and martyr of the "large congregation" (Lichtenau — Petershagen — Margenau — Schoensee — Pordenau).[61] Jakob Warkentin, elder of the entire "large congregation," (cf. above,*#37,3*) had been forced, on the order[62] of the Supervisory Commission in Odessa, to give up his office after seventeen years because of local political disorders and opposition to the progressive ordinances issued by the "Agricultural Society" (with Johann Cornies at its head) and the Area Administrative Office. Warkentin's influence as sole elder of the vast "large congregation," which constituted a solid three-quarters of the Molotschna population, was regarded as the chief cause of these disorders. Tradition has it that the "large congregation" was forced to elect three elders in order to weaken its unity. On June 18, 1842, Minister Heinrich Wiens of Gnadenheim was elected in the Margenau Church and ordained as elder for Margenau-Schoensee by Elder Christian (?) Schmidt of Waldheim. (Wiens had been called into the ministry in 1825, soon after its founding by the "large congregation" under Elder Jakob Warkentin.) On September 2, in the Lichtenau Church, Duerk Warkentin of Petershagen was elected as elder for Lichtenau-Petershagen, and on September 9, Heinrich Toews of Pordenau was elected there; both were ordained by Heinrich Wiens. All of these facts are taken from the handwritten notes of a former Margenau minister and friend of Wiens, who was called into the ministry at the same time as Wiens and also copied this farewell address which he, according to his own notes, delivered on June 22, 1847, in the Margenau Church when Wiens was not permitted to do it himself. After five-years' service as elder, Wiens had not only been forcefully removed from his office but also condemned to life-long exile from Russia for the same reasons and by the same authorities that had forced Jakob Warkentin to step down. He went to the Mennonites in Prussia. The following is an unabridged copy of the address.

b) "Farewell Address of our beloved Elder Heinrich Wiens of Gnadenheim. Sent to his dear congregation which he left behind." [Thus on the cover of our copy.]

"The farewell[63] of Heinrich Wiensz of Gnadenheim. To the two elders of the congregations in Lichtenau and Pordenau, all of the honorable ministers, and my dearly beloved church in Christ.

"Only a few more days and we shall depart from here for a beautiful land, leaving behind plague and fear. It is well that our plague-filled path ends so abruptly.

"Be on your guard, brethren, continue in prayer lest the last day suddenly come upon us to our grief and dismay, as a snare descending and a thief by night, for the good and the wicked to eternal woe [sic].
April 26, 1847."

"In conclusion, I, your loving elder, wish you eternal life and raise my hands up to God over you.

"My dearly beloved colleagues and fellow servants, united in the name of Jesus and the cause of truth, which is and must remain in us to eternity, the salvation, grace, mercy and peace of God the Father and of the Son Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father in truth and in love, be and remain with you and us all! Amen. [sic].

"My beloved, since the Lord Inspector has informed me through a written order of my impending exile from this our Russian Empire, and since I shall, as earlier, not be allowed personally to meet with my fellow-believers again and must therefore take my leave of you in this life, which I now see as a call of God to me even as it once happened to Abraham, and having the desire to be edified with you in love, I have no alternative but to write you. Even though all of this has come over me as a result of hate, the desire for revenge, and the slanderous accusation of my enemies, the same words as those of Genesis 12 come to me: Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

"To leave my external home and farm here is not difficult for me! But alas to leave my colleagues, the children, and the congregation which weighs so heavily upon my heart and which I served so faithfully and tirelessly, although in great weakness for twenty-one years, in such a manner! And since it seems that the dangers threatening the soul are really beginning to come to the fore, it all but breaks my heart! But what shall I say to you or complain about when God has said: you shall go where I send you, according to Jeremiah 1:7.

"Thus I am also inclined to follow this call from God, which, for the sake of my faith and the flock entrusted to me, should not, nor will it be, more difficult than my entry into the ministry of the church twenty-one years ago, following which I conducted the election and ordination, of both of you, my dear fellow elders! In spite of this, with the help and support of my chief shepherd, I want to go where he sends, surrendering myself to him and his guidance, and not become distrustful of him even in the slightest because of the fact that he may be demanding too much of me, but because of our religion and the teachings of our Lord as cited above, leave this land, the congregation, and my house to go to a land that God will show me, consoling myself with the words of the poet:

"Commit thy way, confiding, when trials here arise,
To Him whose hand is guiding the tumults of the skies.
There clouds and tempests raging, have each their path assigned;
Will God, for thee engaging, no way of safety find?

"Trust in the Lord, His favor will for thy wants provide;[64]
Regard His Word and ever thy work shall safe abide.
When sorrows here o'ertake thee, and self-inflicted care,
Let not thy God forsake thee, He listens for thy prayer.

"Remember, if our religion is to abide on the true rock, apparently God cannot spare it from refinement. Therefore I want to content myself right gladly to walk this road with God and beg you now, at this my farewell, to be unafraid about it, standing firm in the faith for the congregation until the Lord will call you to cross over. There abundant grace is already in readiness[65] for the last working hour; nevertheless, as shepherds care for the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has set you as bishops, with all your heart, in order to feed God's people, always ready to cry: The bridegroom is at the door. The congregation commends you [it should probably read: 'Next to you, I commend the congregation to God'] who is powerful enough to sustain all of us and, after our pilgrimage here has ended, to give us the inheritance for our little work and trouble, along with all those who already hold the victor's palm in their hands before the throne of glory. Believe me, were it possible for me I would most willingly attempt to console your saddened hearts, though mine cannot be. I shall never forget you or your love. God abides with me, nor does my conscience accuse me, so take hold of yourself with regard to my departure. I am well disposed to you all and do not suffer too much mental anguish; since no other alternative was possible it must proceed thus if the religion is not to be abolished at once. Thus it is not difficult for me to go this way for the sake of the congregation, and I hope that God may give you strength enough to stand in the gap so that the congregation may be strengthened and united in love. Indeed, remind her herewith, as though I were saying this to her for the last time. And since I know that I leave you in anguish of mind and tears because of my departure, wherewith I burden all of you, and of which I would readily relieve you if only it were possible before God, who consoles us in all our affliction so that we may also console others who are afflicted. Assemble yourselves aright in the Spirit, be united correctly in love and be watchful through faith in Jesus, who is and will remain the final victory [it should probably read: 'victor'] over the world and everything that is in it. And remember that I have not ceased to admonish everyone of you with tears day and night for twenty-one years, which I still do and will continue to do as long as I live. And I know that just as we share in the sufferings of Christ, He will not leave

us without comfort. Compose yourself therefore with the words of Paul: If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are troubled, it is for your comfort which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. II Cor. 1:6. Therefore stand firm in the faith, united in love and hope. I plead with you once more from the depth of my heart that you will not grow weary but contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints according to Jude 1-3. And remember the words written by the holy apostles, saying that in the last days scoffers will come walking according to the lusts of their godless nature, who, because of these lusts, will not tolerate sound doctrine but load upon themselves teachers who tickle their fancy, turning their ears from the truth in the direction of fables. For Paul, in II Tim. 3, says that they will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, slanderers, unspiritual, implacable, traitors, outrageous, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Thus, through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared, they will depart from the true faith as given in the words of Christ cited above and will cling to deceiving spirits and the doctrines of demons. These are they who cause rebellion, being carnal and without Spirit. But you, my beloved, build up one another in your most holy faith through the Holy Spirit, pray, keep yourselves in the love of God and wait on the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. For the time is at hand; the signs, given by our Savior of things that should first take place, are present. Therefore lift up your heads and be servants who wait upon their Lord. Do not sigh with one another over my departure, dear brothers and sisters! All things must be fulfilled. My heart is quite content, for I have never knowingly tried to hurt anyone; and why I must travel this road, God knows best. It appears I must do it because of hate and jealousy, in the same way that the hatred of Jacob's sons against Joseph once broke out and forced Joseph to leave his father and his country. How reluctantly his natural instincts were inclined to do this is not difficult to imagine. But he had to compose himself, trust in God and go where God commanded. I too commend myself and all of you to God and His guidance with the words of the well-known poet:

"Your chosen flock, dear Lord, do you a blessing make,
And grant it, in its time of need, aright its path to take.
Your faithfulness, your eye, your hand, make known to them who always trust your goodness.

"A father and a shepherd, their own tenderly care:
But you are more than both, and can but love them more;
And so we trust in you alone, oh lead us lovingly
In truth and in your pathways.

"Have mercy, oh most faithful Lord, who loved the world so dearly.
That world so deeply sunk in sin it cannot help but grieve thee!
Empow'r your sovereign word today that it may enter
Those hearts as hard as rock."

"Oh, that none of you, beloved, would blame himself because of my departure and perhaps think: If only I had not done or said this or that, or, if we had only done this![66] No, we do not want to do that; rather I forgive and will very willingly go this way should it be the consequence of my sins, if only God will then forgive my sins and remit them. And should this have happened only in order to test our faith, as I firmly believe, be comforted that I go before you as a shepherd, giving my life for the sheep in accordance with Christ's words. Temporal loss and contempt are unimportant to me, for the Lord has freed me from these things some time ago. To leave the congregation and my children in this time of seduction and sadness for the salvation of souls is the most difficult for me; but I am willing to submit even to this, and do as the poet says:

"Where Jesus goes, I follow after, wherever He may send,
For nothing me shall harm nor hurt, when He for me doth fend.
Unless He wills, no sorrow comes, for in His hands
All things reside, and I abide.

"Nevertheless, I beg everyone herewith to leave the paths of sin, even as I did in the past, though in weakness. I appeal especially to all those who may feel that I have said too much in my admonition. Remember, I ask again, take this to heart if you have not yet done so, for I am standing, as it were, in tears before you: you members and brothers living in irreconcilable hatred, be reconciled! Or you who have to this day not renounced excessive drinking, luxury or pride, for God's sake and your soul's salvation have done with it, so that if you still come repenting, you will cause God and His holy angels to rejoice in heaven. God is awaiting your return, therefore come to him in true contrition of heart like the prodigal son:

"Oh my father, may I chance it,
And address you as my father?
Everything I've done is wasted.
Oh my father, don't be angry,
If I still, in spite of all,
Come to where your eye may fall,
I'm not worthy that I should
Your son be called—or could.

"Oh, what shall I now begin,
Will I ever now be able
To come before thy face again?
To unburden at thy table?
Yes I come! For your kind heart,
And paternal, loving kindness
Will incline you to my plight
And at last your help will bless."

"Oh, let me repeat that I forgive and am assured that He, who set me to watch over you these many years and empowered me with the courage to serve you tirelessly in love, will also know how to empower me to travel this strange and unknown way with courage since, as I see it, even this is being done for the congregation. Therefore, I enter upon this way without fear and pray: weep not over this parting of our ways, think rather how soon we may see each other again, even if not in this life then certainly in eternity. There is a time for separation and weeping [reunion?]; separation causes weeping, reunion, joy. 'Wherefore let us look unto the day of the Lord, watching thereunto day and night in good works, that when it appears we may with rejoicing enter the new Jerusalem.'

"May God indeed grant that to us all. Even though this farewell is difficult, it is by far not as difficult as it was to arrive at the decision as to what I shall or wished to do. For when I sought to spare my flesh, fear gripped my soul that God would grow angry with me and punish me for not enduring to the end, and when I determined to sacrifice myself again for the church, I saw the hatred of my enemies and already felt their anger which would, in my case, be mercilessly vented upon me and my family. Only God in heaven knows how difficult it has been for my flesh and blood to retain the victory in this battle. Nor do I wish this, if salvation can be attained in any other way, upon anyone else. Be assured of this one thing, however, my beloved, that my heartfelt love as well as my concern lest you lose your salvation has not grown less in all of this, but has increased. If I could only save you from the hard physical pressures of this life as well as the danger of losing your salvation[67] by giving my life for you in this time of danger,[68] believe me I would not hesitate to do it if only God would give me the strength and help. And now, my sympathetic brothers and sisters, I commend myself and you to God the faithful creator of our souls. And who can harm you if we suffer according to God's will, I Peter 4, and seek to follow after good here on earth? If we suffer for righteousness sake we need fear no harm nor give heed to the enemy's scorn. For it is better, if it is God's will for us to suffer for conscience and truth's sake than for evil-doing; for we know that Christ suffered in the flesh for us all. Thus we have reason, if we

want to be and remain his followers, to be prepared for the same—for the end of all things is at hand—so that we are not alienated in the heat and temptation of affliction and think we are experiencing something strange in my forced resignation, for it says: 'Blessed are you if men shall revile you because of the name of Christ, for he is a Spirit of holiness and of God, blasphemed by the world but abiding in us.' Because we suffer as a Christian we are not ashamed, but, as the apostle says, in such cases honor God. Therefore he exhorts us to preserve the testimony of hope and not to waver; for, as St. Paul says, He is faithful who has promised it. And let us provoke one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day approaching, according to Heb. 10:25. For it is time, St. Peter says, for the judgment to begin with the household of God: and if it begins with us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the Gospel of God? And 'if the righteous man is scarcely saved, where will the impious and sinner appear?' Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls in good works to a faithful Creator, I Peter 4:17-19. Wherefore give diligence to walk in the fear of God, as much as possible, proving to every man that you are truly meek and humble with an upright heart, putting those to shame who have scorned our walk in Christ. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. Therefore live in true lowliness of heart according to the command of Christ, for, as the apostle says, we invoke as Father Him who judges every man impartially according to his deeds; therefore conduct yourselves with fear as long as you live and know that you were not ransomed with perishable silver or gold from a futile life, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot or blemish. I Peter 1:19. Yes, my dearly beloved children, who are once again giving birth in fear [sic], do not refuse to suffer for Christ and His Word here, for, behold, Jesus Christ took his last steps, in shame and scorn, under the oppressive weight of the cross in order to redeem us out of Satan's jaws. Why then should we hesitate to take up the cross of Christ and bear it amidst scorn and ridicule for the sake of the flock entrusted to us, leaving home and everything else here to set out upon an unknown road, since we know that there is no abiding place for us here. And since I have tried to comfort so many of you in my weakness when sorrow struck you, why should not He, to whom I have given myself completely and whose mercy rises above everything, know how to comfort me? No one can rob that from me.

"He who takes hold of Him in faith,
Will not be forsaken in time of trouble."

"Thus even I need not dread to journey,[69] nor should you be saddened on my account; it only oppresses. But even this is done from

love, and so let it be. My prayer to you, expressed in love and trust, is contained in the following words of the poet:

"Let not the world blind you;
For ev'ry child of Mine,
With freedom and with pow'r
Confess God's holy name.
Fear not His honor to proclaim,
Though troubles overwhelm you,
Yes, do hold fast to Jesus Christ
Who gave Himself to save you.
Confess His name with eagerness.
Let nothing here on earth deter
You from His holy teachings.
In faith be strong, immovable,
Him follow to the end;
Consider that this troublous time,
Heaven's glories will outshine,
Which Christ desires to give us.

"That is why the apostle reminds us that all who desire to live a godly life here in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, II Tim. 3:12. And Sirach the moralist says: If you would be God's servant, prepare yourself for temptation. Nonetheless, stand firm in the faith and do not faint nor deviate under cross and persecution but endure in patience and suffering, knowing that no one who has ever called on His name, has been disdained by Him. Indeed, He encourages us, as it were, saying: You who fear the Lord, hope for the best from Him and He will give you grace and comfort at all times; for the Lord is gracious and merciful, forgiving sins and helping in distress. Therefore cling to God and stand firm so that you may grow stronger. For as gold is refined by fire, so also will they who please God be preserved through fiery trials. So why should we be surprised or griefstricken that I must leave you in this way! Hear, says Paul, all things must work together for good to them that love God. Therefore he considers the reproaches of Christ greater riches than all the wealth of the world and points to Moses who, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer hardships with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He looked to the reward and left Egypt, nor did he fear the anger of the king. For he held to Him whom he did not see, clinging to Him in faith as though he saw Him. What more, my beloved, shall I say for our mutual strengthening? For indeed the time would be too short and our edification take no end because of the tender love we bear one another. Therefore, in conclusion, take to heart the words of Paul where he says that the sufferings of this life cannot be compared to that

glory which will be revealed to us, an admonition very similar to our Savior's words contained in Luke 6:22: Blessed are you, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and reject your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. Nor is the servant above the Master; if they have called the head of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they malign those of his household. Therefore be not afraid; he who confesses me before men, him will I confess before my heavenly Father; but he who denies me before men, him will I deny before my heavenly Father; and he who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

"Oh, Jesus, arm our sinful minds
That victory may be ours,
And we be faithful to the end!"

"Thus also the earliest Christians suffered everything for the faith, stopped the lion's jaws, quenched the raging fire, won strength out of weakness, labored for righteousness, sacrificing life and body in the process. This is also our responsibility, but we are incapable of doing this out of our own strength. Therefore let us come before God with knees bowed in our misery, humbly going to the throne, to the mercy-seat where grace and help are ours through His Son.

"God leads His dear children
The way of the cross,
But yet in the end
We receive heaven for dross.
In His Son He has set us
An example so sweet
Who imparts a crown of joy
When suff'ring here is done."

"With a heart filled with such a hope I now take my leave of you, embracing all of you with my spiritual arms of love. May the Almighty unite you in bonds of love! It is the desire of my heart that Satan's great power would not be able to destroy your unity. And now, good-bye, farewell. If we should not see each other again in this life, may He grant us to meet in that happy eternity, where no suffering will sadden or separate us! Full of faith I travel to that place which is our true fatherland. Follow me in this same faith; for there I hope to encounter no hardships. May God bless you and keep you in His grace and truth unto eternal life; may He hover over us with the wings of His grace in order that our witness of Jesus may not cease even in times of persecution. May His peace constantly revive us. With this we must part, comforting ourselves in our Lord Jesus Christ:

"When the need is at its greatest,
The love God bears His child,
Comes from a Father's heart so mild.
In spite of the devil, in spite of the dragon,
I will laugh at all their might,
In spite of the heavy yoke I carry,
God my Father reigns above.
In spite of death's bitter fangs approaching,
In spite of the world and all who there
Are my foes without a cause,
God in heaven is my friend.
Let them constantly avoid me, [thus in the original]
Cornies
And suffer me no more,
Hear, I do not question that,
God the judge of my cause is;
Though he should send me away from here,
Heaven shall remain mine still,
And if only I can reach it,
I have that which gives me joy.
Earthly things, I sacrifice,
Since they hate me without cause:
They retain my earthly clay,
While I go on with God.
Should it seem at times as though
God has left His own behind,
I believe and surely know
God helps and leaves me not."

"With sincerest greetings and best wishes that you may prosper in body and soul, I remain, united in love, your friend and fellow pilgrim, Heinrich Wiens." [Note of the copyist and person who read the letter: "Read publicly on June 22, 1847, in Margenau."][70]

c) Wiens later returned quietly from Prussia and lived just as quietly until his death (c. 1870?). His chief opponent, Johann Cornies, Sr., had died. Nor does anyone seem to have thought of molesting him, the more so since the offices of the colony had come into the hands of the members of the "large congregation" soon after Cornies' death in 1848. According to the reports of Bernhard Harder, he is supposed to have preached only at private services, funerals and weddings. As far as the official public life of the colony was concerned, he was a living man whom they had buried; nevertheless, thousands of people who saw in him the practitioner of a perfect religion and a martyr, still revered him fervently, heaping anger and contempt upon the residents of Ohrloff and

the defenders of Cornies, the more so since these had belittled Wiens and exalted Cornies. For a long time Ohrloff was repaid with bitterness because of Heinrich Wiens and mayor T. (cf. *#69*d). (Compare Ohrloff's position toward the M.B. Church around 1860 and in the "Halbstadt church building dispute" in Chapter XV., etc.) Today all of this is forgotten, largely because of both positive and negative influences emanating from the M.B. Church. For a long time, the office of elder in Margenau remained vacant and was only filled in 1861 by Bernhard Peters, Gandenheim, now retired and ninety years of age, a mild mannered, quiet man, although of the old school. Until then the functions of the elder in Margenau were carried out by the elders from Pordenau and Petershagen. Compare *#160* (2).

D. (2). *An Evaluation of Conditions in the Molotschna Colonies at the Time of Heinrich Wiens' Exile by a Prussian Mennonite Minister* (Supplements to *## 37, 61, 68, 69*) §61(2)

a) The following letter, in abbreviated form, of Johann Wall, a Prussian minister who travelled through the colonies during the time period in question,[71] is taken from Elder Heinrich Dirks' *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* (Mennonite Yearbook of 1907).[72] (Page 73 of the *Jahrbuch*). ". . . As pleased as I was with the many good accommodations . . . I was as deeply grieved over the many divisions . . . to be found there. . . . Many of the people there have grown up with prejudiced points of view, and it seems to me that many of them do not understand the charter of privileges under which they live, nor do they know how to value the grace of His Imperial Majesty highly enough. And I believe, were one to think through the existing conditions there impartially and without prejudice, he would, were it possible, retract many things that have happened here. Let me lay the foundation for this by citing the beginning of that charter of privileges . . . (compare above #55, b to 'First').

"From this it is clear that our fellow-believers in Russia have taken upon themselves the duty . . . to be examples in their occupations and in their daily life . . . to the surrounding neighbors. This is nothing less than to pursue such goals in the building of their villages, roads, gardens, groves, buildings, . . . in farming as will enhance their conduct, conform to their confession of faith, so that the authorities appointed over them can at all times set them up as an example to the other settlers.

"It is easy to see that if this is to be achieved the whole matter needs leadership. But who shall take over the leadership of external affairs? The ministry? No. When, according to Acts 6, the number of the disciples increased, the apostles said: 'It is not right etc.' . . . As a

consequence they chose men to fulfill this service; similarly it would be advantageous to the council of ministers if men could be found in its midst who would, through regulations and example, accept this leadership role. In spite of this the ministry's duty is to instill the Word of God—'every man be subject to the powers that be'—into young and old alike through instruction and exhortation. 'He who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed,' Rom. 13. 'Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution,' I Peter 2:13, so that also in this matter a life in keeping with our confession . . . may be manifested! Had we worked toward this goal during the last thirty or so years, I do not believe that such sad discord, as that in existence today, would have arisen. It is distressing to note that currently there is occasional opposition to that which is contained in the charter of privileges and desired by the crown. We want to be a quiet, obedient people whose 'yes' is still a 'yes' in lieu of an oath. Whoever opposes the orders of the higher authorities not only stands in opposition to God's command but also breaks his 'yes' given in place of an oath! If those, who complain that it is difficult to fulfill all those regulations—whose proceeds flow back into their own coffers—had been here when the army was called up shortly after I returned home and had also witnessed how women and mothers wept hopelessly; . . . or if they should be placed on an equal footing with their surrounding neighbors, they would be happy and thankful for the duties that have been placed upon them as Mennonite-Russian subjects. Where one enjoys extraordinary privileges, extraordinary achievements should follow. . . .

"Concerning the disorders in the congregations, or between the congregations, in general, it appears to me that many people put a greater emphasis upon the outward form than the hidden life with Christ in God, out of which arises a dead orthodoxy rather than a living awareness of what it means to be a member of the body of Christ. Even though some differences may be present among the congregations, the walls separating them must not be so high that sincere and brotherly hands cannot be extended over them. . . . Christ says: 'By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.' But if these differences stir up anger . . . then the words of Paul apply . . . when he says: '. . . I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened . . .', Rom. 10:2. Many a person believes he is a Mennonite if he adheres as strictly as possible to his part of the article on non-resistance, but at the same time forgets that he resists divine and human regulations in many other regards. . . . His heart harbors bitter revenge . . . I have met men whose faces turned red when the problems of other congregations were discussed. If we wish to become disciples of Christ, then His word: 'love your enemies,' must take root in our hearts. Adhering to the outward forms . . . does not make us true members of

our congregation. The fruits of the spirit . . . are: 'Love, joy . . .,' Gal. 5:22. Obviously, however, the fruit of the flesh is, . . . 'enmity' . . . Gal. 5:19-21. But when our members no longer allow themselves to be corrected by God and His Word, or care to follow after the saving Gospel, we should not be surprised that the authorities are forced to intervene in our congregational affairs; if one comes to them with complaints, they must decide; . . . therefore we cannot blame these high authorities, or those who implement their decrees, but are ourselves to blame that our congregations must be preserved through outside compulsion. Thank God that those in power, in Russia too, need not be feared because of our good, but only because of our evil deeds. He who does not want to fear them need only do good and he will have their praise.

"I was deeply grieved to find that discord and divisions had set in even there where, for a time, one had been concerned to work for the intellectual welfare of the people.[73] Should the Apostle Paul write to those parties, he would probably say what he said to the Galatians: 'Oh you foolish Mennonites! . . .' [Gal. 3:1,3]. If the heathen, to whom you have sent the Word of God, were to look upon your discord, would they not say in astonishment: 'Is that the salvation-bringing fruit of the Gospel?' It is because of you that the name of God is being blasphemed among them [the Mennonites] who, with a blind zeal, are opposed to our participation in bringing the Word of God to the non-Christian peoples. I am not against missionary activity, for I myself am a member of a society without, however, giving up any part of my confession. . . .

"I have, in a few words, described the impressions I gained of the conditions there. . . . I did not mean to imply with this that the church was more decadent there than here; not at all. . . . The thing that justifies a joyous hope for the future in me is that one finds a longing for peace nearly everywhere among them. And if this longing does indeed come from the heart, and a good many seek rest and peace where they can be found, and at the same time not only forgive but also forget what has happened, then spiritual and physical well-being can and will come to them. Let us pray that this will happen and that God the Lord will empower all of us, according to the riches of His glory, to become strong through His Spirit in the inner man . . . (Eph. 3:16, 17). With this sincere wish I, Johann Wall, your loving brother, greet you and commend myself to you."

b) Obviously this letter was destructive for Elder Heinrich Wiens and his friends, justifying Cornies nearly more than was right and—in our opinion—more than was necessary. It must have had a depressing effect upon those who held Wiens in high esteem; and it must have been as great a disappointment to Wiens as to his friends that a prominent

representative of the mother church in Prussia should circulate such a verdict. This would have been all the more disappointing if it were correct—as we believe to be justified in assuming, according to our recollection of discussions we had regarding this matter with the Rev. Bernhard Fast and other contemporaries—that Wall was to a certain extent an official representative of the Prussian Mennonite council of ministers, and that on the request of Heinrich Wiens and his followers. For the founders of the Lichtenau congregation had also, before 1825, turned to the "Elders, Ministers and Brothers in Prussia" (*#59*) for moral support in their quarrel with Bernhard Fast and his adherents. The answer (*#59*) must have led the church councils in Prussia to the conclusion that they had been largely misinformed. We have been informed that Heinrich Wiens, who at first met with a great deal of sympathy in Prussia, soon disappointed many people greatly through his sermons and then in turn himself became disappointed, which is probably connected with Johann Wall's travels in Russia and explains Wiens' quiet return and subsequent withdrawn existence in the Molotschna Colony. As far as the minister Johann Wall himself is concerned, we are happy to find in him a man who pleasantly reminds us again of Elders Cornelius Warkentin and Gerhard Wiebe.

§62 E. *A Letter from One of the "Quiet in the Land"*

a) The following original letter, written by a school teacher in 1826, after the separation and organization of the *Kleine Gemeinde* from the large congregation had taken place, demonstrates that next to and within the dead mass of the people, the quarreling parties and congregational splintering (where, even though our sympathy lies first and foremost with Ohrloff, Gnadenfeld and their like-minded followers, and only in the second instance with the *Kleine Gemeinde*—and least of all with the large congregation—we must recognize and feel that right and wrong cannot be clearly distinguished but are to be found mixed throughout the whole)—a small number of the truly "quiet in the land" still existed, as is true of all more or less dead church bodies. Here they, acting like salt, prevent complete decay from setting in; they want to have nothing to do with labels and partisan strife but alone seek life and love in God.

b) "To my friend Hoffmann in Marienwerder [in Prussia]. Pastva, August 21, 1826, according to the old calendar, Molotschna, Russia. My dear Brother Hoffmann, who has also been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord, I wish you and your entire family peace, salvation and blessing in body and soul. . . . My heart is so filled with love toward you that, although I am far removed from you, hardly a day passes where I do not think of you and the many brotherly kisses we gave each other in love.

Even though far removed from one another, the disciples of Christ love one another because each loves the image of Christ and because loving is, in any case, the nature of believers. The mark of a Christian brotherhood is that it is disinterested and selfless, for it does not seek its own gain. It loves, not in order to gain something thereby, but because of Him who loves His own with an everlasting love and has drawn us to Himself out of pure love. Christ speaks to His disciples: By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. The true mark of discipleship is a true and sincere love toward all who love the Lord Jesus unreservedly; for just as no one can be numbered among this group who has not been born again—born of the incorruptible seed, that is, the living, eternal Word of God—similarly no man in his natural state can possess such love, no matter how whitewashed or painted his outward appearance may be. The outward appearance does not impart God's Spirit, nor can it stop or suppress it. This Spirit is free and unconstrained: therefore He blows where He will, and all those souls who have felt His influence in their lives, have waited upon Him, prepared a place for Him to indwell them, and have been called to the true freedom of the children of God are no longer bound to any form! To such as have been made free the Lord says: One is your master: Christ; but you are brethren! They are brothers because one Spirit of sonship in them calls Abba, dear Father! and because they share a common inheritance in heaven in which all, through grace, have an equal part. Nor will these souls tolerate any other head over them, any other name, or acquire any other thing under heaven except Jesus Christ alone! To be named after Him—to be members of His body—that is their true glory and their one happiness. In contrast, those who stress the outward forms carry all the possible marks of a carnal mind on themselves, which then also produces ill-will, envy, quarreling and discord! They live carnally. Nor will the name make any difference: the one may be called—what he wills—by the name of Paul, Apollos or Peter. Christ is not divided! He alone was crucified for us and only after Him must we be called; otherwise we are carnal, and to be carnally minded is enmity against God! O may the Lord keep us and all his disciples from being thus minded. Brethren, love, brethren love one another! The Lord is deeply grieved with His kingdom if brethren do not burn with love. . . . Yes, love, let me burn and cling to you! Nothing shall separate me from you, you are the most precious. Oh let me die with you and thereafter inherit the kingdom of glory. With this I want to close, sending many greetings and wishing that our loving God would, through His grace, prepare all of us to stand in that day with those who will enter into the joy of the Lord. . . . A. Dyck in Pastva."

c) Thus does this "quiet one in the land" exercise his quiet criticism on all the parties that surrounded him. He was certainly not the only one

to do so. Those tending in this direction, though in a very one-sided manner, later centered around the Reimer family of Felsental,[74] Molotschna, among others. These are mistakenly called Quakers amongst us; a church historian, however, would sooner prefer to call them "Gichtelians"[75] or mystics. Contemplative people, they sought God through an inner, spiritual approach and lived quiet Christian lives in line with the ideals of Johannes Tauler (whose goal was "the practical activity of the God-filled consciousness"), who died in 1361; Thomas à Kempis, who died in 1471 (*The Imitation of Christ*); Jakob Boehme, a cobbler, called "Philosophus Teutonicus" because of his profundity, who died in 1624; Johann Gichtel [a collection of letters entitled *Theosophis practica*), who died in 1710; Gottfried Arnold who died in 1714 (*Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie* [Impartial History of the Church and Heretics], and the songs: "O Breaker of all Bonds," "Thus You Blissfully Lead Your Own, dear Lord," among others); the precious Gerhard Tersteegen, who died in 1769 (songs: "O Power of Love," "God Himself is with Us," "Almighty God, We Bow Before Thee," "Come, Children (Brethren), Let's be Off," "My Spirit, Be at Rest," etc.) among others. Their method, i.e., that of the Felsentalers, alone may not be sufficient to carry on the church's work with regard to salvation, improvement, reconciliation, evangelization and missions; but we who attempt to do and speak so much could and should nevertheless learn much from them. If they have, on the one hand, like Mary of Bethany (our designation), developed themselves lovingly though in a manner too secluded from others, we have, on the other hand, partially fallen prey to "too much worry and trouble," becoming impatient with and jealous of every other group and tendency. Why have these "quiet ones" allowed us to smell so little of their alabaster perfume, poured so little of their gentle oil on the creaking wheels of our machinery? Will not the "Master" one day say to them: "Mary, you have not quite understood me; the bridegroom has been taken from you. Now it is necessary to fast at times (Matt. 9:15) and go into all the world (Matt. 28:19, 20); and the world is full of dust and storm, heat and cold, dirt, thorns and tears, full of seeking, faltering and sinking people, even among my Father's children, your brothers and sisters! Mary, get up occasionally and help Martha! and you, Martha, occasionally sit down with Mary and rest quietly a while!"

Gichtel and his followers are ably characterized in the *Calwer Kirchenlexikon*, I, 625: "Johann Georg Gichtel, a theosophist ['theosophy' means: wisdom of God], according to Jakob Boehme was born in Regensburg, 1638, the son of a senator, well endowed and well educated, who, from his youth, led an active prayer life and later studied law. A number of times he turned down lucrative offers. He quickly turned down every opportunity to marry. He gave away all his goods. When he later came into financial difficulties he was often helped in marvellous

ways. After having frequently moved, during which time he was often persecuted, even imprisoned and pilloried, he finally settled in Amsterdam in 1668 and died there in 1710. In his lifetime he was frequently transported into a state of ecstasy, during which the eternal Word by means of God's wisdom permeated his being and transformed him into a priestly instrument. He never deviated from that wisdom. It was in its light that he viewed and understood the Scriptures, the creation as well as history. He did not exactly forbid marriage, but considered it to stand in contradiction to the life of the regenerate. His followers formed a special theosophic fellowship, which, without any outward forms of doctrine, ritual or constitution, sought to lead a life in Christ-like and brotherly love without detracting in the least from the civic life. In 1682 Gichtel published a complete edition of Jakob Boehme's works. . . ."

(Further extensive documentary supplements, which often go back to the period before 1860, are to be found under XXV.)

Appendix
(Supplement to *#15,* l)

A. *Elder Cornelius Warkentin* §63

a) (Taken from the *Mennonitische Rundschau,* No. 4, 1897, Elkhart, Indiana): ". . . I am turning the following letters over to the public . . . documents, as I have them, yellowed with age . . . confirmation of their genuineness. G. G. Wiens. Because of them [the organization of church affairs of the Chortitza Mennonites] he [Warkentin] . . . was awarded a gold medal by Tsar Alexander I, containing a half-length portrait of the Tsar and the following inscription: 'Alexander I, by the grace of God Emperor and Autocrat, etc.' The other side bears the words: 'For that which is profitable. To Warkentin, the elder of the Mennonites.' This medal was given the honorable Warkentin together with the following letter.

b) "Honorable Sir! Most respected elder and pastor!

"With the last mail I received a letter from His Illustrious Lordship, the Prince of Czartorysky, together with a gold medal intended for yourself, most noble sir, asking me to convey the latter to you in the name of the emperor. I acquit myself of this obligation with the more joy since this proof of His Majesty's , and my most gracious Lord's good will toward you, honorable and deserving sir, is long over-due and is simply to be considered a deserving reward for the outstanding ecclesiastical organization which you, noble sir, instituted here in New Russia[76] in 1794. Please accept, most noble sir, my hearty best wishes for this imperial distinction, and be assured of the constant very high

regard and upright attachment I have toward you, and with which I have the honor to be

your obedient servant,
(signed) L. v. Trefurt."
[The Imperial Russian
representative to the
government of the then
free city of Danzig.]

Danzig, April 23/May 4, 1804
[According to Warkentin's letter of thanks.]

"To the elder of the Mennonite Church, Pastor Warkentin of Rosenort" [in Prussia near Elbing]. The same issue of the *Rundschau* also carried Warkentin's response—and letter of thanks to the Tsar, signed: "May 18, 1804, Rosenort . . . Cornelius Warkentin." The same issue also carries an excerpt from his diary concerning the trip:

c) "On[77] June 15 [1794], the Lord's Supper was served in Chortiz [more correctly: Chortitza] to 233 communicants. The introductory message was based on Psalm 3, the message on I Cor. 11:23: 'For I received from the Lord. . . .' On the 19th the Lord's Supper was served in Neuendorf to 173 persons and on the 20th I delivered a preparatory sermon for the Communion Service in Kronsweide.[78] A youth, quite ill during my stay there, was baptized, during which many tears were shed. The Lord's Supper was celebrated on the 22nd, something that had not been done in this congregation for a period of five years [that is since the settlement in 1789!]. For various reasons a brotherhood meeting was held in Chortitza on the 23rd. . . . After the communion service in Neuenburg, Peter Dyck was once more unanimously elected to the ministry. [The same thing was done in Chortitza] . . . where David Giesbrecht and Gerhard Ensz were elected. On the 25th I preached in Kronsweide. Even though only an election to the ministry was to be held, many people had assembled in the hope that I would preach. So I spoke on Luke 19:10 about God's great love toward mankind. After the sermon the election took place: Heinrich Arndt, Franz Bannmann and Cornelius v. Riesen were called. A deacon was also elected. The following Sunday I took my leave from this congregation, at which everyone melted into tears. On the 19th I gave my farewell address in Chortitza before a large gathering, including the Lord Director [of the colony, an imperial official], at which much emotion was manifested. The following week I preached two more times, once in Neuenburg and the second time in Schoendorf before a large gathering. Thereupon a number of things were set right and happily resolved in the colony. Finally, on the Sunday of July 8, Johann Wiebe preached. [He had ordained Wiebe as elder along with David Epp; Wiebe had been elected elder as a young man of



a) August Lenzmann (1823-1877).



b) David Hamm (d.1884).



c) Johann Harder (d.1876).



d) Peter Klassen (1825-1902).



e) Secondary School Teacher Heinrich Epp (1827-1896).



f) Minister Bernhard Harder (1832-1884).



Bernhard Harder Monument in the Cemetery of Neu-Halbstadt.

25, without having first served as a minister; together with another brother, von Bargen, he had been sent to Prussia and brought Regier and Warkentin back with him. David Epp had been elected as elder to support Wiebe before the latter's being despatched to Prussia.] I delivered a brief closing address on Galations 6:17[79] which moved the people so deeply that I had to stop preaching, since my own voice choked to the extent that I could no longer speak and the people began to weep uncontrollably. The farewell from my beloved listeners was moving, and many of them could not let go of my hands, crying out amidst their tears.[80] 'O, how should we leave him whom we love so dearly!' My pen cannot express how I felt at the time. But all of it is known to Him who knows all things. July 10th had been set as the day of my departure. Even though I had long since said farewell to many people it was still difficult to tear myself away from so many friends. The morning hours were devoted to taking my leave from the lord director of the colony. He and his wife burst into tears—we exchanged mutual promises to keep each other in friendly remembrance. When I returned to my lodging, the carriage stood ready surrounded by a mass of people. It would be tedious to describe all the farewell scenes. I pushed my way through the crowd, called a hearty farewell to everyone and was on my way. Nevertheless, many accompanied me by wagon and on horse to the borders of the colony.

d) "Accompanied by four or five wagons, we drove to Ekaterinoslav where we had to settle some matters with the regional government, all of which turned out successfully. Some friends had awaited us here for days already, and upon their insistence I allowed myself to be persuaded to go with them to Novo-Moskavsk, there to present the Word of God. I preached on Col. 1:12-14. On Sunday, together with Privy Councillor Lehn, I had gone to the director of the economy in order to discuss some matters pertaining to the colony with him in the presence of Elders[81] Johann Wiebe and David Epp. Thereupon we took our departure and headed in the direction of Krementschug, the two men deciding to accompany me to Vyschinka. The Lord, who had so graciously led us thus far, will continue to guide our paths on this journey if we commit ourselves to Him. Now we directed our journey toward Vichantz [?]. After a few days we arrived at a settlement of Germans who had moved there from Germany some twenty-eight years ago. This settlement consists of six villages: four Lutheran and two Catholic. After I had visited with the Lutheran pastor in the morning, had had coffee with him and visited his church, I also visited the Catholic priest, Innocentius Walter by name. A very upright man, he had been born in Prague. He welcomed me with great courtesy, showed me his church and its utensils. And when I took my leave from him after a lengthy conversation, we were

both convinced that we would meet once again at that place of eternal bliss.[82]

e) "We arrived in Vyschinka on Saturday, July 26. [At the Hutterites, cf. above #6, c, d, e 'Jakob Hutter' and #16 'Elder Gerhard Wiebe']. We were cordially received; since it was harvest time most of the people were in the fields. In the evening we attended the prayer meeting which they held every day toward evening. I preached on Luke 13:23-24 concerning the necessity of a true conversion and how everyone must arrive at such a new birth. The audience was quite attentive. In the afternoon the countess [Rumianzev-Sadunaisky, the owner and protectress of these lands] came to see us. I had a conversation with her and, upon her gracious invitation, had to promise to visit her the following day. And so we did this on Monday, being received most graciously by her. We were shown the noteworthy aspects of the castle as well as the summer palace in which the Empress [Catherine II] resided during our journey through these parts. In the evening, at the request of the congregation, I conducted a prayer meeting. I spoke on Romans 12:1, 2 regarding the reasonable church service of the first ['brethren?'], and how it should be right before God and rendered in the Spirit and in truth. At the conclusion of the service I noticed that the brothers and sisters had been greatly moved. After a stay of three days we continued our journey. Even such a short stay had bound us together in love and fostered a mutual trust to one another to such an extent that nearly everyone begged us, amidst tears, to tarry a while longer, the farewell from the reverend 'Ohm' David Epp [elder], 'Ohm' G. Willms [minister], and 'Ohm' Abraham Krahn [who had accompanied him from Chortitza] was particularly difficult; especially 'Ohm' Epp wept aloud without saying anything.

f) "From Vyschinka to the town of Slisnov [?], populated solely by Philippites [Filippovzy, in Russian 'Raskolniki'], we were accompanied by the Reverend Elders Johannes Waldener and Heinrich Hahl. After many difficult days of travel we arrived at Plotzk . . . [because of unrest among the Poles, the Russian officers advised him to travel by way of Riga] . . . and, on August 21st, arriving safely at Riga, I inquired of the governor regarding my further travels to Memel in the Kurland. He, however, advised me, because of the unrest, not to travel by land. Here I found a family that wanted to go to Russia. They made me preach to them in the large room of a hotel where people from various religious backgrounds attended. Everyone expressed their satisfaction to me and a rich merchant invited me to dinner in his garden. The following day the mayor and his secretary of commerce, Lord Brettschneider, came to my lodging and asked me to step into his carriage and come with him so that he and his family could visit with me. I agreed and we took a

roundabout route in order to admire the magnificent fortifications of the city. We finally arrived at his house where his wife welcomed us warmly and invited us for coffee. We carried on a lively discussion, and in the evening he had his carriage take me back to my lodging. The next morning I made my formal visit to His Excellency, the Governor: he was polite and promised to do everything possible to expedite my return journey. He invited me to dinner, and I had to promise to come. On the 26th I made my way to the governor's palace where I dined with fifteen other people. Many of the guests were of very high rank, among them His Excellency von Meiendorf, commander of the fortress." [Thus far in the *Rundschau.*]

A (2). *The Succession of Elders in the Traditional Churches of the Mennonite Brotherhood in South Russia in the Districts of Chortitza and Molotschna* §63(2)

(Supplement to *#63,* d.—Elders of the M.B. Church will be dealt with under *#96:* "The Office of Elder in the M.B. Church in Russia.")

I. *Flemish Church, Chortitza*

1. Behrent Penner (installed by letter from the council of elders in Prussia) ..... died 1791
2. Johann Wiebe (ordained 1794 by Cornelius Warkentin) ... died 1823
3. (Ordained co-elder David Epp) ..... died 1802
4. (Ordained co-elder Peter Bargen) ..... died 1809
5. Jakob Dyck, Sr. (also elected during the time of Johann Wiebe who installed him in 1812; see Dyck's letters) ... 1823-1854
6. (Ordained co-elder Franz Wiens) 1851-1853
7. Jakob Dyck, Jr. (at first an ordained co-elder with Jakob Dyck, Sr.) 1854-1855
8. Gerhard Dyck (ordained by the Flemish-Chortitza Elder Braun, ordained his successor, retired, and died in 1887) . 1855-1885
9. Heinrich Epp (high-school teacher) 1885-1896
10. Isaak Dyck (ordained by the Kronsweide-Schoenwiese Elder Peter Klassen, who had been installed by the Chortitza Elder Gerhard Dyck) ..... since 1896

II. *Frisian Church, Kronsweide-Schoenwiese, Chortitza*

1. Deputy Elder Klassen ..... died 1794
2. N. (?) (ordained in 1794 by Cornelius Warkentin) ..... died ?
3. Heinrich Janzen (ordained by ?) 1800-1824
4. Jakob Hildebrand (ordained by the Rudnerweide Elder Franz Goerz, Sr.) 1826-1867

5. Peter Klassen (ordained by the Chortitza Elder Gerhard Dyck) 1867-1902
6. Jakob Wiebe (ordained by Elder P. Klassen) 1902-1907
7. Johann Klassen (son of Elder Peter Klassen, ordained by the Chortitza Elder Isaak Dyck) ..... since 1907

III. *Molotschna*

A. Flemish Mother-church Ohrloff-Petershagen

a) as organized 1804-1824:

1. Elder Jakob Enns, Tiegenhagen (ordained by the Chortitza Elder Johann Wiebe) 1805-1818
2. Jakob Fast, Halbstadt (ordained by Elder J. Enns) (He united the church with the Frisian Rudnerweide Church, dropping the designation "Flemish") 1818-1821
3. Bernhard Fast, Halbstadt (Tiege) (ordained by the Rudnerweide Frisian Elder Franz Goerz, Sr.); was elder of the combined church Ohrloff-Petershagen 1821-1824
   of the branch-church (see "b" following) ..... till 1860

b) branch-church Ohrloff-Petershagen, since 1858: "Ohrloff-Halbstadt," since 1863: "Ohrloff-Halbstadt—Neukirch" till 1895:

4. Johann Harder, Blumstein (ordained by Elder Bernhard Fast) 1860-1876
5. Abram Goerz (ordained by the Lichtenau Elder Jakob Toews), was elder of Ohrloff-Halbstadt-Neukirch 1876-1895

c) smaller church, Ohrloff I. Neukirch, since 1895

1. The same (Abram Goerz) ..... since 1895

A (2). *Ohrloff II., since 1895*

Representative of the Elders, Minister Bernhard Wiens.

A (3). *Halbstadt*

Formerly "Petershagen," an affiliate of the Ohrloff Church till 1858, when the new church was built in Halbstadt (Neu-Halbstadt), after the stone church in Petershagen had been dismantled. The stones of this church were used in the foundation of the large church building in Halbstadt.

Independent since 1895.

1. Elder Heinrich Unruh (descendant of the Alexanderwohl old-Flemish Church, and ordained by the Gnadenfeld Elder Heinrich Dirks) ..... since 1896

B. The Large Church, Lichtenau, the true-Flemish branch of the Ohrloff (Old) Petershagen Church, from 1824 to 1842 with Petershagen II, Margenau, Schoensee and Pordenau.

1. Elder Jakob Warkentin (forced by the authorities to abdicate his office; in a similar manner the Large Church was forced to divide into three independent churches: Lichtenau-Petershagen, Margenau-Schoensee and Pordenau; was ordained by the Chortitza Elder Jakob Dyk, Sr.) 1824-1842

A. Lichtenau-Petershagen II (since 1842)

1. Elder Duerk Warkentin, Petershagen (ordained by Elder Heinrich Wiens, Margenau) 1842-1869
2. Jakob Toews, Blumenort (ordained by Elder Bernhard Peters, Margenau, retired, eighty-two years of age, died 1909) 1869-1908
3. Bernhard Epp, Lindenau (ordained by the Ohrloff Elder Abram Goerz) ..... since 1908

B. Margenau-Schoensee (with Alexanderkron 1890-1901) (a Lichtenau branch since 1824, independent since 1842)

1. Elder Heinrich Wiens, Gnadenheim (ordained by the old-Flemish Elder Christian Schmidt, Waldheim) ..... 1842-1847 (exiled from Russia 1847; returned, retired, died 187?)
2. Bernhard Peters, Gnadenheim (ordained by Elder Heinrich Toews, Pordenau; now retired, 1910, an aged man of ninety-three living with his eighty-five year old wife in the home of his son Elder Heinrich Peters) 1861-1887
3. Heinrich Koop, Alexanderkron (ordained by Elder Bernhard Peters) ..... 1887-1901 (since 1901 he was elder of Alexanderkron, the independent branch church of Margenau)
4. Peter Friesen, Gnadental (ordained by Elder Heinrich Koop) 1901-1907
5. Gerhard Plett, Hierschau (ordained by Elder Heinrich Koop) ..... since 1907 (after the churches Alexanderkron, 1901, and Schoensee, 1903, branched off, it now is in the diocese of Margenau)

B (2). Alexanderkron (branch of Margenau, 1901)

1. Elder Heinrich Koop (see above under b, 3) ..... since 1901

B (3). Schoensee (affiliate of Lichtenau, independent since 1903)

1. Elder Heinrich Peters, Liebenau (son of the Elder Bernhard Peters, ordained by Elder Jakob Toews, Lichtenau) ..... since 1903

C. Pordenau (affiliate of Lichtenau since 1824, independent since 1842)

1. Elder Heinrich Toews (ordained by Elder Heinrich Wiens, Margenau, retired, died 1870) 1842-1868
2. Isaak Peters (former school teacher in Fuerstenau und Sparrau; ordained by Elder Bernhard Peters, Margenau) 1868-1874
   (With Isaak Peters the church experienced a temporary division. Peters emigrated to America in 1874; now, 1910, an aged man of eighty-four and bishop, retired in Henderson, Neb.)
3. Dietrich Barg, Alexandertal (ordained by Elder Bernhard Peters, Margenau; retired) 1878-1904
4. Gerhard Regher (ordained by Elder Heinrich Koop, Alexanderkron; died January, 1910) 1904-1910

C. *Frisian Church Rudnerweide*

(Immigrated as a church body from Prussia, 1820)

1. Elder Franz Goerz, Sr. (commissioned in Prussia, 1819) in Russia 1820-1835
2. Benjamin Ratzlaff (ordained by Elder Bernhard Fast, Ohrloff) 1835-1861
   (ordained his successor, retired, emigrated to America where he died three weeks after his arrival at the age of eighty-two)
3. Franz Goerz, Jr., Gnadenfeld (ordained by Elder Benjamin Ratzlaff) 1861-1891
   (ordained his successor, retired and died in 1901 at the age of eighty-one)
4. David Nickel (ordained by Elder Franz Goerz, Jr.) ..... since 1891

D. *Old-Flemish Ukowallian Churches*

I. Alexanderwohl

(Immigrated as a church body in 1820 from Prussia and partly from Poland; original church was Przechovka near Schwetz, West-Prussia.)

1. Elder Peter Wedel (in Russia since) 1820-1870
   (ordained his successor, retired, migrated to America, 1874)
2. Jakob Buller 1870-1874
   (emigrated to America in 1874 together with most of the church members and the entire church council)
3. Johann Schartner (came to Molotschna from Poland, ordained by Elder August Lenzmann, Gnadenfeld) ..... since 1877

II. Gnadenfeld

(Immigrated from Prussia, Brandenburg Province, as the church body Brenkenhofswalde-Franztal, a branch of the Przechovka Church; see Alexanderwohl, 1835-1840.)

1. Elder Wilhelm Lange (in Russia since) 1835-1841
2. Friedrich Wilhelm Lange (ordained by Elder Peter Wedel; he withdrew from office) 1841-1849
3. August Lenzmann (ordained by Elder Bernhard Fast, Ohrloff) 1854-1877
   (during Elder Lenzmann's illness and after his death the ministers Gerhard Thomsen and Aron Rempel served as deputy elders. Baptism and Lord's Supper however were administered by Elder Franz Goerz, Jr.)
4. Heinrich Dirks (former missionary in Sumatra for about twelve years; ordained as missionary and elder by Elder Lenzmann) ..... since 1881

III. Waldheim

(Immigrated in 1836 from Russian-Poland, as a church body, branch of the Przechovka Church.)

1 (?). Elder Christian (?) Schmidt (in Russia since?—ordained by Elder Benjamin Dirks, Ostrog; relocated in 1844—where to?) ..... c. 1842

2 (?). Benjamin Wedel (teacher in Tiegerweide; ordained by Elder August Lenzmann, Gnadenfeld; withdrew from office—when?) ..... c. 1866

3 (?). Cornelius Dirks (ordained by Elder Johann Schartner, Alexanderwohl ..... since 1877
   (Elder Dirks withdrew from office in Waldheim, moved to the Kuban 1902, where he is elder of the Mennonite church, Wohldemfuerst-Alexandrodar, having served them since 1882. Leading minister today in Waldheim—Johann Goerzen.

Comment. The Chortitza and Molotschna mother congregations ordained the elders of all the branch settlements. All the parishes settled by Molotschna settlers (with the exception of the M.B. congregations) always (?) form joint parishes (such as Nikolaifeld, Sagradovka, Memrik, etc.), and their (first) elders are commissioned by an elder delegated by the Molotschna Mennonite Council of Elders. We believe that the Chortitza settlers of the Flemish and Frisian mother congregations form their parishes in a similar manner. Their elders were ordained by the elder from Chortitza; "New York" (Ignatievka) and "Nikolaievka" (Orenburg).

As far as the question of ordination in the congregations within the Chortitza region or originating in Chortitza is concerned, it is of purely "general-Flemish" origin in that the "Flemish" Elder Cornelius Warkentin commissioned the elders of both the mother congregations (Chortitza and Kronsweide) in this area. Later the "Flemish" Chortitza and the "Frisian" Kronsweide elders repeatedly ordained each other's officials, as the above makes clear. The "general-Flemish" ordination succession in the Molotschna has died out: in the congregations emanating from the "large congregation" all current commissioning is done by the Margenau Elder Heinrich Wiens, who was himself ordained in 1842 by the "old-Flemish-Ukowallian" Elder Christian Schmidt of Waldheim. These elders, then, have an "old-Flemish" (not "general-Flemish") ordination. The same is true of the Ohrloff Elder Abram Goerz (he was ordained by Elder Toews and ordained Elder Bernhard Epp). The Rudnerweide and Gnadenfeld congregations stand in the "Frisian" ordination succession (which itself has its origin and ritual from the "Old-Flemish"): Bernard Fast, Ohrloff (ordained by Elder Franz Goerz, Sr., of Rudnerweide) commissioned Elder August Lenzmann who in turn commissioned Elder Heinrich Dirks. The same is true of the Alexanderwohl (and Waldheim) congregations: Elder Lenzmann ordained Elder Johann Schartner (Schartner in turn ordained Elder Cornelius Dirks). Thus the "Flemish" congregations of Lichtenau . . . and Pordenau have an "old-Flemish," and the "old-Flemish" congregations a "Frisian" ordination! Even Halbstadt is in the "Frisian" ordination succession: Dirks-Gnadenfeld, Unruh-Halbstadt.

Where did the Russian Mennonite ordination of elders originate, that is, from where did the Prussian Mennonites get it? Most probably from Menno Simons, Obbe Philips and Dirk Philips. (There is no official written document to this effect in existence, however.) Obbe Philips visited the Prussian Mennonites before Menno did. The "Frisian" or "Friesland" congregations certainly received their ordination (or "commissioning") from their compatriots Menno and the Philips brothers. In the last years of his life Menno had close contact with the Friesland congregations, receiving assistance from them on a regular basis (annually one-hundred Reichsthaler). The same must be assumed with regard to the separated "old-Flemish" congregations, first, because, according to the most reliable Dutch-Mennonite historical sources, they were considered to be "the strictest followers of Menno Simons," and, secondly, because they, according to the same sources, held ordination ("commissioning") in very high regard. Menno was personally in contact with the Prussian congregations as well as by letter (before their separation into "Flemish," "Frisian," "old-Flemish" and "old-Frisian"), and therefore an ordination succession beginning with Menno is also a strong possibility, indeed nearly a certainty, for the

"general-Flemish" group (we must always differentiate between the "Flemish," the largest Mennonite group, and the "Old-Flemish" or "Ukowallians," one of the smallest groups). The same can be said with equal plausibility of Obbe and Dirk Philips. (Dirk was the first elder in Prussia, an elder of the Danzig congregations, which subsequently rose to such importance that after the division the strict "Flemish," or "Strict-ones," were also called "Danzigers".) Menno and Dirk Philips had both been consecrated as Anabaptist bishops or overseers by Obbe Philips (who later, however, doubted both the right and the efficacy of his consecration and consequently, as we know, withdrew completely from the Anabaptist cause); Menno had earlier been ordained as a Catholic priest and as such stood in the "apostolic succession" no worse and no better than Luther, Calvin and the other "Reformers," who had also only been consecrated as "priest" (presbyters), and not as "bishops," according to the Roman and Greek rites. As is well-known, the Catholic churches delegate the right and the power of consecration only to the bishops as successors to the apostles, and not to the presbyters. (Most) of the Protestants, especially the Reformed Church, the Presbyterians, Congregationalists (free Presbyterians or Independents) and the Baptists (which have broken away from the Independents, as these have broken away from the Presbyterians), assert, however, that the office of bishop (overseer) and presbyter (elder) is one and the same office. These churches only differentiate between the office of elder and bishop (as synonymous) and that of deacon (helper) in the church, and the terms, elder, presbyter, minister, pastor, etc., simply designate a rank and are identical with "bishop"; even though one of them may be the presiding officer (that is, the first overseer, first bishop: "primus inter pares"—the first amongst equals). In the document of the Molotschna Mennonite Church Council of Elders (cf. below, #108ff.) the idea is clearly expressed that only the elders are "bishops" and can ordain—as "successors" (heirs) of the apostles—and that the ministers or teachers are not even presbyters in the full Catholic sense of the word, since they can neither baptize nor administer the Lord's Supper, but only preach, marry and bury. The Mennonite system, therefore, is an "episcopalian" system with three ranks: that of elder (as full bishops), ministers or teachers (not full presbyters) and deacons. (The M.B. Church is more correct in this regard: cf. above, *#4*, e). The Mennonites of Swiss and South German descent differentiate between full servant, servant of the Book (or "Word") and deacon. The American Mennonites readily use the term bishop.

What of the importance or meaning of ordination or commissioning? For Menno's views on this matter, see above, *#4*, e, footnote, and *#15* a and b and footnote; see also "The Old Testament in the Mennonite Brethren Church," *#96* and *198*ff.

It may be of interest to learn to know the concepts regarding ordination as they are used in the Protestant churches. (The Roman, Greek and other Catholic Churches, as is well known, recognize only one office as having been handed down in a proven manner—by the laying on of hands of one bishop to another in an unbroken line of succession back to the apostles: the "apostolic succession.") We quote: I. From the strongly denominational Lutheran *Church Lexicon* by Carl Meusel, Ph.D., vol. 5, Leipzig: Justus Nauman, 1897—page 71: ". . . [It] follows, on the one hand, that the Reformation . . . had to break with the Catholic idea of priestly consecration as a sacrament; on the other hand, however, the various theories regarding ecclesiastical offices and differing views regarding church law, which have arisen in the Lutheran Church, have produced a different evaluation of ordination. [Luther, the presbyter, ordained a bishop for the Naumburg diocese (Nikolas von Amsdorf) 'without salt, fat, tar or grease,' that is, without anointing oil or the ceremonies of the Catholic Church; cf. the *Calwer Church Lexicon* and Plitt and Petersen, *Martin Luther*. . . .] The pietistic system of collegiality viewed it as an indifferent [as an 'introduction' to every appointment to a parish], repeatable ceremony without any intrinsic significance or corresponding effect. Indeed, well into our own century (as the Wuerttemberg Church to 1855, for example), entire [Lutheran] territorial churches have not practiced ordination except as an introduction [an 'induction': a blessing with the laying on of hands whenever a pastor takes over a new parish . . .]. Ordination is not necessary for salvation, nor is it necessary in order to make the official acts of the minister and his administration of the means of grace efficacious, as though the latter could not otherwise be effective [as the Catholic Church teaches]; it is necessary, however, to maintain good order within the church and its service, to maintain the awareness amongst the members of the church that the ministerial office is instituted by God and invested with godly authority, and to maintain the awareness among the ministers that they are servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God and therefore accountable to God. From the very inception of the Lutheran Church, the power to ordain has been in the hands of the superintendent [the 'main overseer,' in Russia—the provost: the 'Superior'], who can draw other church officers as witnesses and assistants into his service, but who can also have an ordinary minister substitute for him and entrust to him the power to ordain. [In the Mennonite churches the highest or final authority quite naturally lies only and alone with the 'brotherhood.']" II. From the *Calwer Church Lexicon* of 1905, vol. 2, page 310: ". . . According to the original Reformation point of view, as well as that of the symbolical books (the Augustana articles XIV), only a person duly appointed [by the Mennonites—elected by the brotherhood] to a pastorate [the position of

elder or minister] is entitled to administer the means of grace, nor is a special ordination necessary for this. It is true, of course, that in order to have been duly appointed to a ministerial position one must be confirmed by the church authorities [the decisive authority among the Mennonites is the brotherhood. . . .]

The following Protestant churches of episcopal polity claim apostolic succession: 1) The Anglican (state church) of England; 2) The Lutheran Churches of Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) and Russian-Finland (but not as necessary to salvation); 3) The Moravian Brethren (although many consider their succession to be very doubtful). Further 4) the "episcopal" Methodist Church of North America (without claim to apostolic succession in the Catholic sense of the term: Wesley, himself only an Anglican presbyter who recognized only the Anglican Church, ordained the first bishop for America out of necessity) and a few others. The Roman and Greek churches, for whatever reasons, do not recognize the succession of the first two above-named churches in spite of the fact that those churches believe they can prove it, since some of their bishops joined the Reformation.

We cannot see anything else in ordination than the prayerful confirmation of the person being ordained in his position, to which he has been called upon the desire of the congregation, by the man (or men) which the congregation deems most appropriate according to the apostolic example, not order. Otherwise we would reach the point where it would be necessary to create a tradition, that is, prove an apostolic succession, and then create a "Mennonite succession," accept it at face value, and raise it to the level of an article of faith! Menno is quite silent regarding this matter: apparently it did not concern him (as also the form of baptism, even though he rigorously demanded the presence of faith before baptism, without which baptism has no meaning for him—cf. XX: "Baptism" etc.). Menno cannot therefore be called for a canonization of ordination (or for a particular form of baptism).

B. *The Tsar's Gracious Visit to the Molotschna Mennonite Colony* [83] §64

(Taken from Abram Kroeker's *Familien-Kalender, 1900* [Family Almanac 1900] in a free rendering, partially abbreviated and partially supplemented.)

a) The Rev. David Hiebert, Lindenau (founded in 1804/05), great-grandfather of the *Almanac's* author, relates the following in a manuscript he left behind:

Four weeks before the 21st of May, 1818, the day on which His Majesty, the "blessed" Emperor Alexander I, arrived, an officer from

Orechov, a small country town in the District of Berdiansk, came to Hiebert's house and said to his wife that the emperor would breakfast with them. This appeared well-nigh unbelievable to them. After eight days the same officer returned and ordered that four hundred horses be made ready for the imperial procession. The colony's administrative office in Halbstadt issued one order after another to clean and beautify houses, yards and gardens. The necessary quota of horses was met through daily requisitions (and although His Majesty graciously recognized the zeal of the Mennonites, he would be driven only by Russians). The streets were swept and decorated with sand and flowers. Guards stopped everyone who wanted to drive or ride on them. The weather was beautiful the day His Majesty arrived and "a great crowd had gathered in order to see our noble monarch." The Mennonites were stationed in a row on the left side of the street, the Lutherans from the neighboring District of Prischib together with a few other persons on the right side. The imperial train consisted of nineteen carriages. The emperor sat in the sixth, an open coach drawn by six horses. Slowly the procession made its way through the village. Graciously, the emperor greeted the people to the right and left; the crowd in turn bowed respectfully. "My wife and I," writes the Rev. Hiebert, "stood before the door of our house in order to welcome our noble guest. He gave the order to stop opposite our house, stepped out and with quick steps approached our door. When he stood before us my wife said: 'If I have found grace in the eyes of Your Imperial Majesty, I would like to offer him a small gift.' And she handed him a beautiful bouquet of flowers on a platter. His Majesty willingly accepted it. When we urged him to enter the house, he said: 'My host and hostess must enter with me.' A large table, decorated with two lamps and many flowers, was spread out at the top of our large room.[84] In the lower corner near a cupboard stood a table decked with bread, butter, onions and pork. The emperor walked up and down the room with rapid strides several times. 'O,' he said, 'there is something to eat here.' 'Yes,' said my wife, 'if I may serve Your Imperial Majesty with this simple fare, I invite you to eat.' Thereupon the emperor answered: 'Yes, dear children, I want to eat here.' Hurriedly we adjusted the table and placed the chairs around it. The emperor would not take the seat of honor at the head of the table, however, preferring to take an ordinary chair and seating himself on the side of the table. Thereupon I requested that he seat himself on the better chair. But he answered: 'No, my hostess shall have the place of honor.' These words perplexed us, and my wife said: 'I am far too humble a maid to sit next to the Lord's anointed!' 'No, dear child,' said the emperor taking her by the hand and leading her to the place of honor: 'Just be seated next to me for we are all mere humans, created equal by God.' I had to be seated across the table from the emperor. The words of Psalm 144:3 came to my mind: Oh God, what is

man. . . . Thereupon the two generals Gortschakov as well as the aged Contenius were urged to come to the table. His Majesty ate with apparent appetite, drank beer and coffee, and, while eating enquired as to our circumstances in the most affable manner: how long we had been in his empire, how we liked it and whether or not we had any complaints about anyone. To this we answered: 'No, but we would like to thank Your Imperial Majesty for his great mercy and gracious reception. We would also like to request grace and Your Majesty's protection for the future; not only for ourselves but also for our brothers-in-the-faith in Prussia, who because of the great and difficult war, have come into dire straits, so that they too might find acceptance and support here. Thereupon the emperor said to my wife: 'Yes, dear child, it shall be done.' Upon leaving, the emperor presented my wife with a diamond ring as a souvenir of this for us so important day." (Thus far the *Family Almanac*.)

b) Perhaps the immigrations of Rudnerweide and Alexanderwohl in 1819/1820 and others thereafter were the fruit of this most humble request and the most gracious response to it. The colony was blessed by a second visit of this monarch on October 25, 1825, shortly before his totally unexpected and deeply lamented death; this time his longest stop took place in Steinbach. (Compare *#69*a.)

C. *Agricultural and Ethical Matters from the First Decades of the South Russian Mennonite Settlements*
(Supplement to *#31-37*)

A. *Yesterday and Today* [85] §65

1. Today, the Mennonites of Chortitza, Molotschna and their daughter colonies, believe that every farmer must own a large number of good horses: [86] five for the plow, two for the harrow and another one or two for driving back and forth. He must also have an open wagon, or *oboianka*, with steel springs, which, in case of necessity, can carry six not too "heavy" people while springing properly and running as easily as possible on its axles, and a covered buggy on springs with glass doors "in case of rain," or for more distant trips to visit in the more remote colonies or landed estates, which one cannot yet reach by rail. Naturally, there must be several "Britschkas"—heavy wagons—which one has "shortened" to spread manure, transport grain to the railway, the city or the *Pristani* (river port), or has "extended" into huge hayracks according to the old West Prussian models and improved by the Americans. The land is tilled with iron plows, having one or more bottoms, of Russian, German, English and American, though most often of indigenous Mennonite [87] origin. Grass and grain are mowed with machines. The

scythe is only used occasionally and that incidentally in order to cut the grass in a corner or mow weeds. Horse-drawn rakes and seeders are used. One can hardly imagine a farmer any longer without a horse-powered threshing machine, not to speak of the large land owners and renters where one or more steam threshers are deemed indispensable. The "threshing stone" (*Uutfahrsteen*), a stone cylinder with deep ridges turning on a metal axle and drawn by a pair of horses, often on a round threshing floor in a shed or more often out in the open, sometimes in small and sometimes in larger circles, which threshes the grain spread out on the floor, was once considered an innovation in the steppes but is now used only by the very small landowners. The heavy handwork that remains to be done is performed largely by servants and maids from the Poltava region and the other central provinces or also "Mordwines."

2. "Once upon a time," during the first decades, things were different. If the landowner could come up with four horses which could be fed hay, straw,[88] and chaff during the winter, and live off the grass in the meadow the rest of the time [but what excellent meadows!], he was quite satisfied. If, with his West Prussian "marshland" plow, he had plowed a small piece of land, called a "Gewende," some eighty to one-hundred fathoms long, he would then hitch his horses to his harrow with its wooden tines to level what he had plowed before proceeding to plow some more. Generally the owner himself walked behind the plow after he had "thrown" a number of handfuls of grain from his seed-bag (a linen bag slung across chest and shoulders) which he had at the ready. Some farmers were more well-to-do, owning a fifth horse and hiring a second driver who would be harrowing all the time while the other was plowing. The farm wagon, which our fathers had brought with them from Prussia, was, according to our current standards, a clumsy, unmanageable vehicle. These wagons had very thick wooden axles, hubs that were two feet long and very thick rims. The box-part of the wagon was made of the same kind of boards now found on wagons used for hauling manure. But these wagons were not only used for hauling manure and grain, for when the farmer, together with wife and children, wanted to go to church, a wedding, etc., shorter boards were simply laid across the side-boards for seats and the family drove solemnly off to its destination.

3. At harvest-time most of the farmers had to depend upon the scythe for cutting their grain and many even for cutting their grass. Where sons and daughters had not yet grown up, many a housewife had to take their infants and other small children with them into the field where, all day long, she would follow her husband, tying the cut grain into sheaves, later stacking these in shocks together with her husband. When the sons and daughters had grown up they took the place of their mother and father. At the age of fourteen they began to regard



Old-fashioned Farm Implements.



Old-fashioned Farm Implements.



c) Mennonite Farmers and their Russian Servants (the oldest man was still a serf).

themselves as fully competent workers. Children aged ten and younger would pull a "drag-rake," a rake about five feet wide, in front of which they were hitched, in order to collect the scattered stems of grain. Constant injury to their bare feet from the grain and weed stubble was the worst part of this work. Bringing in the hay was much more enjoyable since the hayfields were softer and the temperature cooler. However, even the more difficult harvest work was done with more or less pleasure. The old folks knew well for whom they were working and the sons and daughters considered it an honor,—for John ("Jehan") to be a full-fledged cutter ("en Hauer"), for Tina ("Trienke") to be a full-fledged binder ("ne Bingersche") who followed on the heels of father or brother and with flushed face and sparkling eyes teasingly called out: "Father," or "John, let's have more!" "Well, Tina you shall have enough!" And now, Tina (or Nettie, Mary, Sara, Justina, etc.) get at it! And she did. Yes, our fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers[89] worked hard, many of them too early in life and too hard. Many choleric fourteen to sixteen year-olds ruined themselves for life, and many of us,

their descendants, have inherited their weaknesses and gained dull teeth from the sour grapes our fathers ate. This is the darker side of the "good old days" of our colonies! But Tina and John did not think about such things. It was a matter of pride if father "with his Annie," or "Henry with Nettie" had "cut and bound a whole dessiatine!" This was as honorable then as getting the top grade in school today. And then there was the annual fair in Alexandrovsk, Prischib or Tokmak, at which Henry would get a new cap and Nettie a colorful new kerchief. "Yes, father, you will not forget to bring me back kerchiefs for Nettie and a nice cap for Henry! The children have worked so conscientiously during harvest and threshing-time." "Well, well, Mother, do you think that I do not love my girl [90] and boy just as much as you do? I won't forget! We could not wish for a better hired hand and maid." And Henry and Nettie in the "little room" hear this through the open door and glance happily at each other. "Nobody's parents are as good as ours, right, Henry?" "Of course, I have known that for a long time." (Henry always gets a little irritated when Nettie explains things to him he already knows.) The following Sunday Henry and Nettie are especially inclined to go to church, leaving for the service quite early: the new kerchief and the new cap would also like to see a Mennonite church for a change, and be seen in turn. Here one meets his comrades and friends, and then the latest news is discussed: "Seeds (sunflower seeds which were roasted and cracked in all of Russia), nuts and ginger-snaps for fifty kopeks, and for Nettie just as much" says Henry, likewise Nettie and the others. But at night, after her usual evening prayer, Nettie had had, in her poor high German, to ask God's forgiveness for thinking so much about her kerchief during the sermon. Henry did not know what to say about his cap, but three times he turned around in his bed before he could fall asleep—which seldom happened—sighing each time in the hope that "the dear Lord will probably forgive me." Twenty years later when he was a minister, the respected "Ohm" Heinrich Janzen, the young people wondered how it came that "Ohmke Janze always knew exactly what went through their heads during the service, so that one sometimes felt like creeping under the bench." And Nettie, later "Mumke Niefeldsche," had to smile at times, in spite of all the respect she now bore for "Ohm Hendrik," of whom she would never have expected this since he had never been able to speak as a boy, always only replying to her wise speeches: "I have known that for a long time." He was not as ignorant as he had appeared after all, she concluded, and she liked to hear no one preach more than brother Heinrich, despite the fact that she sometimes blushed with embarrassment when reminded of youthful pranks. But now she understood what Hofacker's book of sermons, Menno Simons' *Foundation of Faith* and *The Wandering Soul,* as well as other books, had been doing in Heinrich's barn bedroom, and why his songbook

appeared so used! Yes, that is how our earlier "Ohms": Elder Jakob Dyk, Sr., of Chortitza, Elder Bernhard Fast of Halbstadt, Elder Peter Wedel [91] of Alexanderwohl and others grew. Do not think for a moment, you young gentlemen and ladies—children of today's Mennonite farmers dressed in hats and gloves and wearing watches with chains—that the people of thirty, fifty or seventy years ago were, in their own minds, less well-dressed or less happy and respectable than you! Perhaps it would be healthy for you and succeeding generations if many of you would do a little more back-bending work than you now do! By all means, many of you could study better in the village, secondary, girl, and preparatory, etc. schools at home; and more of you could study in the high schools and universities than is now the case—not in order to act arrogantly or become estranged from the village and the faith of your fathers, but in order to bring that into the Mennonite village which it lacks: good Christian male and female doctors, deaconesses, teachers, engineers, technicians, agriculturalists, linguists and historians prepared to study and interpret the Bible, female teachers and women prepared to lead Bible studies and children's worship services, and good God-fearing lawyers. We have many, far-reaching and very serious church, civic and economic interests that need to be represented both among ourselves and to governmental agencies: millions worth of common property in land and money, etc., responsibilities toward one another, toward the emperor and the fatherland, toward God and His church and all of His people in the world! We live widely spread out in this dear Russian fatherland: on the Dnieper and in the steppes of Asov and the Don, on the Inguletz, the Kuban, the Terek and in Turkestan, in Poland, in the Urals and in Southwest Siberia, and our first pioneers are probably already probing the soil on the Amur and Ussuri rivers. And we all have the spiritual interests directed toward eternal goals, the same obligations of service toward the emperor and country—out of grace and favor, thank God!—and that without "Bloodied garments" (Isaiah 9). The responsibilities are constantly becoming more complex and more difficult: therefore—voluntary intelligence, come forth! And whomever God sends more deeply into this common Russian fatherland as doctors, engineers, female teachers and doctors, etc., or as messengers of the Gospel into the farthest reaches of the heathen world—go forth with God! We owe our country, the church and the world, a big debt. And if we do not care to work, to do thorough physical and intellectual work, then, as a society and in spite of our advantages and relatively large wealth, we will become obese dunces like the domestic goose who is no longer able to help itself,—we will perish like some of our congregations we could name in foreign countries, who have already or are about to perish—and that as a consequence of our too great affluence and intellectual indolence.

But where are we? We have not yet helped grandfather or great-grandfather harvest his crop! To employ the Russians as hired help was unknown; this only began toward the end of the thirties. But even during the forties, fifties and sixties many farmers still cut the grain themselves with the scythe.

4. Threshing, which now comes to an end with the last cart-load of grain, cart-loads that begin to creak at the same time that the happy buzz of the mower begins and is shortly followed by the melancholy and always nervous and anxiety-causing[92] hum of the threshing machine,—took its beginning in those days when the last sheaf had been brought in. In part the grain was threshed with the horses' hooves, with wagons, and since the beginning of the forties gradually with the very practical threshing stone. Until the latter appeared on the scene, the flail was the most important threshing instrument. Rye and oats (sometimes barley as well) were threshed only with the flail and during the winter months in order to keep the straw fairly long: rye straw was used for thatching roofs while the rest was chopped up for fodder. At times a stack of rye or oats remained until after seed-time!

5. The growing of flax constituted an important source of income. Today farmers probably seed a number of dessiatines with flax, not for the fibers, however, but in order to sell as much flax seed as possible. Formerly people were not concerned about the seeds; if one harvested more than was needed for seed the surplus was taken to the local oil presses, but this was of secondary importance since the first concern was for the linen fibers. About one-half acre (one-quarter dessiatine) or more was planted, and when it ripened properly it was pulled out by hand, tied in sheaves, set in shocks and, after it had dried, was carefully threshed. The further preparation of the linen was also very tedious, keeping the younger as well as older daughters, under the supervision of the mother, busy with spinning the fibers almost the entire winter. (At the most one will today find an occasional conservative grandmother spinning some sheepwool for stockings.) The yarn would be woven into linen by weavers, of which there were plenty in those days, and then it would be bleached for a long time—this "night bleaching" was always quite an occasion in the village!—and then made into shirts by hand for the whole family by the mother and daughters. The proverb: "self-made and woven by hand, attired aright the peasants stand," was still fully operative. One did not only make the shirts out of this linen, but also the fine Sunday dresses of the wives and daughters, for which purpose it was dyed brown. And these our grandmothers, certainly considered themselves "*mennisten infyn*" in accordance with the common Dutch proverb (that is, extremely presentable according to Mennonite standards, "solid, practical, clean and pleasing but not conspicuous"). What has happened to this

mennisten infyn in hundreds of our families today! "Beautiful on the surface but underneath . . ." the author's blessed mother used to say. Later the "Lavkes" (from the Russian "lavka," store) appeared with their "Lavschniks" (lovotschniki), Mennonite merchants, partially schooled in Prussia, brought in the finished cloths from Romny (they said Remen), then from Poltava and Kharkov. Today one no longer spins or weaves, but the industrious mothers and daughters occupy their time with tailoring, sewing, knitting and crocheting. Nor does it pay to knit anymore, expect to serve as a pastime for the mother's accustomed diligent fingers and in order to prepare gifts of love for children and grandchildren; it is more profitable to purchase ready-made goods. If one wanted to spin, weave and dye today as they did "once upon a time," that would be about as profitable as trying to ride to Kharkov next to the railroad on a comfortable Mennonite buggy pulled by three horses, as was done forty years ago. But our wealthier settler fathers and mothers who came from Prussia were not as plain as those we have described above; it was the conditions pertaining in the settlements which brought this with it, until the "Lavkes" arrived making it possible to exchange their own products for money. My great-uncle B.F. in N. remembers (1904) seeing our great-grandfather F.[93] in H. walking gravely to church on a Sunday in a long blue coat with dollar-sized buttons, wearing knee-pants, silk stockings and shoes with silver buckles, and a metal-knobbed cane in his hand, while dear old great-grandmother tripped along at his side in a long dress with wide flowing sleeves, jewelry, silver buckles, wide skirt, shawl, and low-brimmed hat. The author's mother, who came from Prussia in the early twenties, told us of etiquette lessons taken in the city, of steel vests (the present corsette, only much more barbaric), the dread of her wild sister "Buschke" (Barbara) on whom they would put the longest steel vest so that she would behave "properly" when visitors came or when they went to visit people. His grandfather wore a fur-coat during the cooler seasons, and, during the warmer season, a coat that is called a "Nikolaiev Schinelli" in Russia. Our mothers' (grandmothers' and great-grandmothers') apparel ("Wardrobe") reminded one of the historical portraits of the educated classes in 1812. These were all made out of the finest materials and lasted for decades, but eventually, after alteration upon alteration would have to be discarded. Gradually the trivial styles of the fifties took over.

6. It is not difficult to understand that the financial condition of most of these settlers in those first years was not an enviable one, for there was no ready market for their farm products. The concerned, fatherly government tried to remedy this situation. Privy Councillor Contenius, the well-known supervisor and benefactor of the colonies, raised the level of prosperity considerably in the colonies through the introduction of sheep-raising. The acquisition of breeding sheep of Spanish extraction

(Merino sheep) soon made it possible for every farmer to possess a small flock: many as large as 150 animals.[94] Since wool and mutton could be readily sold, better economic conditions gradually prevailed. The hides of the dead or slaughtered sheep, after they had been prepared by the tanner, were made into fur-coats, caps, and, in early days, even into jackets and pants for the male members of the family. With the constantly growing ability to sell grain as the result of the creation or flowering of such market cities as Ekaterinoslav and Alexandrovsk (on the Dnieper) and Mariupol and Berdiansk (on the Sea of Azov), grain-farming, especially wheat, gradually grew to the present dimensions, eventually displacing both the sheep industry and the silk industry which had grown up alongside of it. Then railroads were added. Through these and the massive sales of grain the farms, wealth, and way of life in our colonies have also gone through massive changes. (Cf. further "Agriculture and Industry.")

B. *The Chortitza and Molotschna Mennonite Colonies of 1820 as Evaluated by Foreign Travelers* §66
(Taken from the *Beitraege* of Reiswitz and Wadzeck, pp. 350ff.
Compare with *#56*)

1. The "Old Colony" [Chortitza District]. [Supplement to #31.]

a) With the exception of three of its villages, the fifteen villages of the so-called "old colony", which was founded in 1789, lie approximately sixty to eighty versts[95] south of Ekaterinoslav on the right bank of the Dnieper, next to or near its tributary, the Chortitza River. The three exceptions are: Kronsgarten,[96] which lies about one German mile [seven versts] above Ekaterinoslav on the left bank of the Dnieper; a second, called "Island Chortitza," is situated on the large wooded island "Chortitza" [the center of the former "Ssietschi" or Saporog Cossacks: "Saporoskhzy"] which is separated from the next village by a small arm of the Dnieper. The third, Schoenwiese, lies on the left bank of the Dnieper near the town of Alexandrovsk.

b) The buildings in these villages have been patterned largely after those here [Prussia]; but because of the scarcity of lumber, which had to be transported overland from Ekaterinoslav [? was it not floated down the Dnieper, over the Porogi rapids!! Or was this not yet the case?], home-made, sun-baked mud bricks, together with wood studding, were used in its place. Many farmers still did not have all the necessary farm buildings when I visited them in 1817. In general, few large gardens have as yet been planted, most of the people contenting themselves with growing only the most necessary vegetables. Melons and watermelons, which thrive in the open and yield very good crops, are still substituted for fruit by most of the settlers. Upon the express order of the higher

authorities, a common nursery is maintained in Rosental by the settlers, who share costs and labor, from which everyone could provide himself with young plants or scions for grafting; but because of indifference and lack of time this opportunity is little utilized. Some settlers, however, have already planted fine gardens and small flower beds. There is also a significant plantation of mulberry trees, and two buildings dedicated to the development of the silk industry are located close to the common nursery. Probably due to a lack of skilled knowledge, but more likely because of a lack of interest and enthusiasm for the project, since all the required work is done under a system of compulsory labor, the income barely covers the cost of the expenditures. A similar plantation is located in the main village of Chortitza, after which the whole settlement is generally called.

c) The so-called community house [later called the Area Administrative Office], in which the village mayors and administrative officers meet to deliberate over essential matters, is located in the village of Chortitza. The secretary of the colony, who must know how to speak and write both German and Russian, lives free of charge in this building and currently receives a salary of 500 rubles in bank notes.[97] Under the supervision of the colony administrator, he must keep the financial records of the colony and take care of all of the constantly increasing paper work and translation.

d) The income, which can be expended for the general welfare, is: the income from the ferry near the village of Einlage, some 2000 or 3000 rubles annually from the community flock of (1000 Merino) sheep, and finally the rent money from the community beer and brandy brewery.

e) One of the most praise-worthy institutions serving the common good is the fire insurance company which the settlers organized on their own initiative on the model of those existing in West Prussia. If I am not mistaken, there are only two churches in the whole colony [in Chortitza and Kronsweide]. As far as schools are concerned, everyone tries to help himself as best he can. But there is a serious dearth of competent teachers.

f) Because of the shortage of water, and its total [?] absence on the higher elevations, all villages are located in the valleys, so that they can seldom be seen before one is very close to them. Einlage and Kronsweide lie between rocks and cliffs right on the banks of the Dnieper. An attempt has been made to utilize the water gathered in the valleys to power water mills, though with little success. For when the snow melts in the spring and heavy rains fall, the too rapidly rising water levels often break the dams, while in the summer water is totally absent.

g) The soil is everywhere very fertile, as the lush growth of grass in the valleys demonstrates, and produces good crops with little or even

poor cultivation if only the weather is suitable. Often, however, extended droughts dash the best of hopes. The Old Colony has a decided advantage in that it owns, communally, a small forest on the island of Chortitza which provides the settlers with both lumber and fuel. Even the gorges and valleys are largely covered with bushes.

h) The emperor ("the crown") has donated many sheep of better breeds to the settlers, from which they have already developed good-sized flocks. The wool is processed in the factories in Ekaterinoslav.—Community sheep raising.

i) A three-and-a-half bushel measure of wheat sells for fifteen to seventeen rubles, rye for five to seven rubles, barley for four to six rubles. The price of wheat is relatively high because the yield is seldom good [!!] and all of it is bought up for export.

k) It may not be amiss to mention here that a number of ditches and scattered bricks on a knoll between the two villages of Chortitza and Rosental mark the place where the imperial favorite Count Potemkin's palace stood, in which he entertained his empress thirty years ago.

l) The entire journey from West Prussia to Chortitza took twenty days. We travelled by way of Ostroblenka, Brest-Litovsk, Kavel, Ostrag in Volynia—where the oldest Mennonite colony Meveritz, with its two villages, is located [today only remnants remain of them due to massive migration to America]—Berkitschev, Slatopolie, and Elisavetgrad. Up to Mirigrod [Novy-Mirgorod?], just before Elisavetgrad, there were inns with sheds ("Saray") under which the wagons were driven. [Then and now!]

m) Statistical overview of the Chortitza Colony, 1819: Population: 560 families; 2,888 persons; 181 births; 69 deaths, and thirty weddings.

Animals: 2,582 horses; 6,090 cattle; 11,774 sheep; 2,070 pigs, and so much fowl that most of the owners could not cite a figure, with a total of 32,684 dessiatines of land.

Implements: 345 plows [for 560 families!!];[98] 542 harrows; 532 wagons.

Home industrial equipment: 557 spinning wheels; 49 looms; 5 oil presses.

Forestry and orchards: 25,546 mulberry trees; 8,520 improved apple, pear, plum and peach trees; 16,988 cherry trees; 4,721 wild apples, pear and plum trees; 80 walnut and hazelnut trees; 954 grape plants; 890 acacia and poplar trees; 32,730 willows and forest trees.

Buildings: 476 residences; two churches; twenty-two windmills; one watermill; three groats mills; one beer brewery; one brandy distillery.

Silk industry: silk produced in the homes to the amount of thirteen pounds and 210 grams, and on the plantation (Rosental), eight pounds and eighty grams. Price per pound was fifteen rubles.

Artisans: two watchmakers; nine wood turners; ten coopers; eighty-eight cabinet makers; twenty-six carpenters; sixteen blacksmiths; forty-nine weavers; one painter; twenty-five tailors; twenty cobblers and as many millers, oil press workers, distillers and brewers as there were establishments.

§67 2. *The "New Colony" [Molotschna District] from 1807 to 1817*
(Supplement to ##33 and 56)

a) At the break of day [writes a traveller [99] coming from Orechov via Tokmak in 1807] we came around a mountain and caught sight of the six houses that bear the name Prischib. This is the home of the inspector of the Molotschna colonies, at present the young Baron Uexkuell, who had studied in Germany. He very oblingingly afforded us the opportunity to look around this region so suited to grain and vegetable growing. On the right bank of the Molotschna lie the colonies founded by the Wuerttembergers, the Germans, the Poles, the West Prussians, the Hessians [from Nassau], and the East and South Prussians [the so-called Molotschna Colonial District, most heavily populated by Lutherans and some Catholics].

b) In order to acquaint ourselves with the conditions pertaining in the colony we first drove to Tokmak where the annual fair was just being held. A bridge is built over the arm of the river here which leads to the first Mennonite colonies. Driving from one to the other, we visited eighteen settlements in three days and were received with pleasure by this diligent and industrious little group of people. Because they have only begun to develop this region since 1805 [1804!], the Mennonites had not yet begun to engage in those handicrafts which were not absolutely essential. Their houses, barns, granaries, gardens and fields witness to their love of order and industry. They had come with their own wagons, some of them being drawn by from five to seven of their own horses, carrying such beautiful furniture as: chests, closets, chairs, tables, bedsteads made of walnut wood, so that their homes were quite appealing. Many had sold their property [in Prussia] for thirty to forty thousand guilders, and each one could proudly affirm that he had paid his ten percent emigration dues honestly. Sixty-three of the 322 families had not accepted the advance money offered by the Russian government, and what is more, eighty-nine families had each brought from ten to twenty thousand ducats in cash with them with which they now supported their poorer brethren. [Many very poor families followed later, partially funded by the Prussian congregations. Among the descendants

of these poor emigrants, who often pushed or pulled their own small wagons, many now belong to the wealthiest Mennonites in Russia.] In the two [three] years since they had arrived, they were able to finish most of their homes. This, indeed, leaves a very positive impression of their activity, especially if one remembers what is involved in building such homes in this country. Already these industrious people own well-built windmills equipped to bag flour. Because of the absence of a market, the flour, which we found to be white and finely ground, is still only used in their own homes. They brought a load of butter to Taganrog which was so eagerly bought up that they immediately saw to it that two more shipments were sent. Livestock inventory: these Mennonites not only brought many cattle, horses and sheep along with them from Prussia, but also breeding stock. Even though their women preferred the sheep brought from Prussia because of their longer wool, they have nevertheless received [from the crown] seven Spanish [Merino] rams and five ewes from Odessa. In order to improve their strain, they want to acquire 140 large white Russian sheep for purposes of cross-breeding. Regrettably, many sheep were stolen. It is too bad there is a total absence of timber. Not even a wild shrub on the Molotschna River. They have to attempt to get the lumber they need from the Dnieper, some sixty to seventy versts away. The Sea of Azov is approximately the same distance removed. However, nature has seen to it that they will never suffer a shortage of fuel for burning, since the grass of the steppes grows so lush and so tall that one can barely make his way through it [O where has that grass gone to!]; moreover, a type of bulrush grows in the river that can be used for fuel. [Soon they also began to use manure, pressed into bricks, for fuel, which continues to this day.] All of them assert that they are quite satisfied, and if only they were finished with their initial arrangements they would turn their hand to the arts and crafts. [Freely used.]

c) The same traveller, from whom most of number 1 was taken, writes the following about Molotschna between 1817 and 1820. The land, which is level here, is considered more fertile than that of the Old Colony. Nevertheless, aside from that which has been planted, not even a tree or shrub can be found. Every effort is made to remedy this situation by planting trees. Farming is carried on the same way here as in the Old Colony. Animal husbandry, however, appears easier because there is a better supply of grass and water. And yet this colony has suffered more from animal diseases than the old one. Now they have provided the so-called "Tschumacken" [Russian oxen drivers], to whom they ascribe the transmission of the disease, with a special road [the "salt road"] so that they dare no longer make contact with the colony. Cattle of Russian stock are seldom found here because they produce less milk than the German ones, and allow themselves to be milked only when the calf is

present. Attempts have been made to deceive the tender instincts of these animals with a stuffed calf-hide [!?], though not always successfully. Since the Molotschna is not navigable and flows into a swampy land-locked sea [the Molotschna Liman], all products are sent to the Sea of Azov or to the Crimean peninsula. However, most of the butter and cheese is sold to buyers who come to the very homes of the settlers.

d) The villages of this colony are laid out in a regular pattern, with wide streets and ditches [100] on either side that run through it, and no more than twenty farmers. [Later some villages were founded with as many as forty farmers: this depended upon the nature of the plan and the situation of the village in it.] The buildings are uniformly patterned after those here [in Prussia], and already one can find some good homes. The earlier buildings of the Old Colony were built in an irregular manner, but now everything is strictly regulated: at first the buildings were erected fifteen rods apart, then twenty, and finally, in 1818-1820, twenty-three rods in order to leave sufficient space for gardens and provide a degree of safety against fires. [Later the yard allotments became larger and the streets much wider.] Next to each home there is an orchard with a promising stand of new trees, while industry and love of order are everywhere apparent. Like the Old Colony, this one also has two churches: in Ohrloff [101] and Petershagen.

e) The "New Colony," in spite of its much later beginnings, is far ahead of the "old" one in its location, equipment, and even in its standard of living; indeed, the later immigrants, because they were generally well-off or even rich, had all lived there for one or two years, paying well for everything they received, raised the standard of the Old Colony. In return, the settlers of the Old Colony helped those of Molotschna with advice and help, enabling them to progress more rapidly [*#31* and *53*]. There is a considerable vinegar brewery in Halbstadt, and its wealthy owner [Johann Klaassen, the second colony administrator of the Molotschna District] has now also started a cloth factory.

f) While the surrounding neighbors of the Chortitza Colony are exclusively Russian, especially many of noble descent, who live in a friendly relationship with them, the Molotschna Colony is surrounded by the "Nogai" or "Nogaizy," an originally nomadic and very warlike, i.e., robbing Tatar race of some 5,000 persons descended from a Crimean Khan. They hate the newcomers who have limited their pasture-lands, and earlier expressed their displeasure against them in various ways. About ten years ago four Mennonite settlers were killed one night not far from a Mennonite village by these Tatars in a most lamentable fashion. Many other settlers escaped a similar fate only by making a hasty

escape, through presence of mind or a lucky turn of events. Nevertheless, the danger threatening the settlers from these barbarians is diminishing from year to year since the government is doing everything in its power to civilize them. They have now been forced to give up their nomadic life style, settle down and cultivate the land. To give up their old, free way of life, however, is very difficult for them. Since the murder of the four Mennonites, the Tatars have also been forced to give up their traditional custom whereby every man constantly carries a weapon on his person. This was an iron hammer attached to a long wooden handle! They used these hammers especially to kill wolves after they had been tired in the chase by their very swift horses. [Later they had to use a short, thick leather whip for this purpose, called a "Kantscherg," "Malachai," or even "Nogaika," for which purpose a lead bullet was braided into the end of it: also a wicked toy!] In spite of all these measures, the rustling of cattle continues. [Later the Mennonites and Tatars became good friends; in 1860 the latter all emigrated to Turkey.] Their former localities[102] were turned into Bulgarian colonies or Russian farm villages. [A second group of neighbors, located for a long time on the right bank of the Molotschna below the Molotschna Colony, were the Doukhobors, living in the village of Terpeniie among others. Later they were resettled in the region of the Caucasus. Our traveller has high praise for their ethical and industrious characteristics.]

g) As far as the climate is concerned, in the region surrounding the Chortitza and Molotschna colonies, there were [and still are] particularly severe blizzards [in Low German: "de Stuem," in Russian: "Viuga"], usually lasting from two to four days during the winter season, a season itself subject to variation as to duration and great temperature fluctuations. At such times it was especially dangerous to travel on the steppes because they were very sparsely populated and points of orientation were few. Large numbers of cattle are lost during these blizzards, especially when they suddenly appear early in the fall and the herds cannot be brought into the barns, enclosures, or at least into protective valleys in time. The animals, especially the sheep, run irresistibly before the wind until they find shelter or a cover. Sleet is perhaps even worse if it strikes the herds unexpectedly out in the open and continues for several days. Summers are mostly long and very warm, up to 30° Reaumur in the shade; by August the steppes have turned predominantly grey; in September or October the fall rains usually set in and a new growth, even new flowers, give the steppes the appearance of a new spring. The spring is probably richer in grass and flowers, but often very fickle in regard to its beginning and changes in temperature. In the beginning the settlers suffered from severe fevers and other diseases due to these rapid, drastic variations in climate. If the precipitation, even though not in larger amounts, would fall at the right

time, the steppes, given the inexhaustible fertility of the soil, would become a region of unsurpassable productivity. [In spite of the unstable weather conditions and unpredictable rain and snow fall, this region has made the colonies rich. Freely used.] N.B., Reiswitz and Wadzeck, p. 398, relate the emperor's visit in Lindenau described above in connection with the foregoing and add that "Mrs. Hiebert received a diamond ring as a gift."

§68 C. *Johann Cornies and the Agricultural Society*
(Compare with *##38-42, 61* and *61(2)*)

1. a) The history of the development of the Molotschna Mennonite colonies and that of many others in Southern Russia is intimately related to the life of a man whose name has already often been mentioned and who deserves to be remembered in greater detail, so that especially those who benefitted from the fruit of his blessed labors may remember him with thankful hearts. This man was called Johann Cornies; he lived in the village of Ohrloff, which lies on the Kurushan, a small tributary of the Molotschna River (eighteen versts from Halbstadt and thirty from Melitopol).

b) In 1805, as a sixteen-year-old lad, he came to Russia from Prussia with his parents. A few years later his parents settled in Ohrloff, which had been founded the year he arrived. Here, amidst very plain circumstances and the unpleasant conditions existing in a new settlement, Cornies, at the side of his parents and other settlers, quietly ripened into the man who was later to exercise such an immense influence on his surroundings. He came from a poor home, nor had he had the opportunity to acquire a formal education in school. He later tried to remedy this situation by reading widely, and in the school of life, which became his chief teacher, he had ample opportunity to develop his remarkable intellectual talents. And he used these opportunities to advantage; in this way Johann Cornies became a knowledgeable, experienced, thoroughly practical man with a broad and lucid perspective on life. Ample evidence of this is to be found in his activity as leader of the Molotschna school system and chairman of the Agricultural Society,[103] as well as in the numerous outlines of reports to the authorities and orders to his subordinates, which are all written in the language of a thoroughly educated man. At the same time he possessed a pious mind and a heart filled with love toward his fellow-man.

c) After many bitter failures, Cornies succeeded in acquiring a small amount of cash which he used to rent the unsettled Mennonite lands from the crown. With a few hundred sheep he founded a small sheep ranch on the little river Juschanlee, the largest tributary into the Molotschna from the left, from which, in a few years, the beautiful

"Juschanle farm" emerged. Here he experimented with soil cultivation, forestry and gardening, cattle, sheep and horse raising. The results of these experiments later benefitted the whole settlement as well as many of the neighboring populace.

d) The success of this man's experimentation soon attracted the attention of the higher authorities who recognized his excellent characteristics, his practical turn of mind and his superior insights. From 1817 onwards, as a young man of twenty-eight and the "plenipotentiary of all Russian Mennonites,"[104] he had the obligation to further the welfare of his brethren in every way possible. As witnessed by a letter of 1823, he dedicated himself completely to this calling. Among other things the letter states: "I feel constrained, as much as lies within my power, to work while there is yet time, for surely the night will come when no one can work. I depend on no man nor do I pay any attention to the slander of those who disagree with me, for I place my trust in God, my Savior. The time is at hand when everyone of us can do much; however, be not cold, or lukewarm, but in the name of God attack your work!" It was this disposition that enabled this man not only to become the indispensable friend and advisor to all the unprejudiced and enlightened men of good will among his fellow believers, but equally the helper and benefactor of the Russians, Jews and Tatars, to whom his activity, upon the commission of the authorities, was gradually extended. The Nogai called him the "Batschka Ivan" or the "nimitz-sheik"—the great leader of the Germans—and, after many a contest with their most courageous, powerful, skilled, creative, and fastest riding representatives, he was honored and loved by them. Johann Cornies was one of those rare people who could find the "real person" within the—to the limited, self-satisfied, and short-sighted average man apparently ridiculous and repugnant—outer shell of a stranger and knew how to elicit the best from him and in turn give his best in order to bring out the best in the stranger.

e) When the Agricultural Society was founded in the Molotschna in 1830 on the initiative of the government, the Minister of Crown Lands confirmed Johann Cornies as its life-long chairman[105] (the current Colony Administrator was named 'first colleague', and two others named as members, later the committee was elected. Cornies dedicated himself to this new and expanded sphere of activity with the greatest sacrifice. Before he instituted something for the general welfare, he usually made the necessary experiments himself. These often cost him considerable amounts of money and sometimes naturally proved futile. In spite of that his motto remained: "No innovator, but no stubborn devotee of the old either: the middle-way is the golden mean." Through patience and endurance he successfully overcame all opposition, whether this came

from people or circumstances. He knew the moral behavior and outward circumstances of almost every person in the territory under his supervision, and acted accordingly. Where he met rudeness or discourtesy, he manifested himself as the serious educator of his people.

f) The energetic and blessed work of this man was fully acknowledged by the authorities. In matters pertaining to the colonies Cornies became the trusted advisor of the Colonial Board and the central governmental agencies in Odessa. He associated with members of the high and highest nobility and state officials. The imperial house graciously honored Cornies with its attention. In 1825 he (as all of the landowners in Steinbach) was honored by a visit of Tsar Alexander I; and Tsar Nicholas I, at an introduction before his entire retinue in Simferopol, affably called him his "old acquaintance." Later Cornies had the honor and good fortune of hosting Tsar Alexander II, then heir-apparent, as well as other members of his household, as his noble guests at his farm, Juschanlee. Various gifts are to be found in the possession of members of the Cornies family as souvenirs of such most gracious visits. Prince Voronzov, governor-general of New Russia and Bessarabia, visited Cornies often and frequently sought his counsel in matters concerning the governance of his territory.

g) Among other honorary appointments, Cornies was granted the title of corresponding member of the Learned Committee of the Ministry of Crown Lands, which for him meant being an active and useful co-worker.

h) Cornies died in 1848, in the midst of his uninterrupted activity and in his sixtieth year, after having labored thirty-one years for his fellow-men in a spirit of sacrificial faithfulness and amidst rich blessings. The church could not accommodate all the mourners—among whom were many of his Tatar friends—who had come from near and far to his funeral. Love and thankfulness escorted him to his plot in the cemetery in Ohrloff. A marble monument marks his grave. This monument is in the form of a pillar with its top or head broken off: the deceased is supposed to have requested this in order to express the fact that, according to his conviction, the task of cultural reform within the Mennonite colonies had not yet been completed or sufficiently strengthened. Thus tradition has it.

i) We will conclude the brief sketch of this man's life with the testimonies of two respected men of learning. The learned traveller von Haxthausen, who was Cornies' guest for a number of days and thus learned to know him more intimately, said of him: "The Tsar of Russia could appoint him to a governorship at any time and he would fit right in; but he himself wants to be nothing but a Mennonite farmer who, at the time of his baptism, promised not to govern or carry arms in

accordance with his Christian duty." For this reason he could not be made a member of any order[106] and elevated into the nobility along with it, because people were then of the opinion that if one left the Mennonite farming communities one ceased to be a Mennonite. He requested that all medals given him be "without ribbons or decorations"—*bies lienty i uschka.* A former president of the Supervisory Commission in Odessa, State Councillor, Privy Councillor and Senator von Hahn, who, as Cornies' superior and friend, knew him intimately as the result of a long-standing correspondence and personal contact, attested of him: "Cornies was a unique man. He possessed a keen mind and was, in every regard, a practical advisor. We have him to thank for the beautiful woods that lie like an oasis in the desert around the Molotschna Colony." (According to Unruh, Klaassen and others.)

2. *The Agricultural Society.* a) A long period of preparation preceded the creation of the Agricultural Society of 1830. Since Johann Cornies was its soul (not only during his lifetime, but through the power of his ideas continues in this capacity to this day, just as the Mennonite brotherhood of Dutch-Prussian origin still bears the religious imprint of Menno's fundamental ideas), the Agricultural Society had already existed some thirteen years prior to its formal organization and naming, indeed it had existed as long as had Cornies' model farm at Juschanle. Associations had long since proven their worth in the Molotschna Mennonite area: the Ohrloff "School Association," with Cornies as the central figure, the Bible Society, and the Literary Society. The founding charter grants the society, later known as the "A.S.," the status of a "free academy!" This designation was not regarded too noble for an institution consisting of Mennonite farmers which had Cornies as its central driving force. The occasion for the creation of a society with the status or character of a "free academy," which, in tune with the times, was granted strong powers of command and execution by the highest authorities, came from a wish expressed by Tsar Alexander I in Steinbach upon seeing the successfully planted groves of trees especially in that village (founded by Klaas Wiens, Molotschna's first colonial administrator) and Juschanlee. Franz Isaak, a former Ohrloff minister, writes regarding this noble visit and the founding of the Agricultural Society: "The extent to which the government was concerned to expedite and bring to fruition the Mennonite responsibility of being a model in work and conduct can be seen by the fact that His Majesty Tsar Alexander I visited the colonies in 1818 [cf *#64*] and 1825, which inspired the inhabitants to go about their work with joy and courage; for they saw him face to face who was, in so large a measure, the promoter of their well-being. His gracious condescension to enter many of the homes and his friendly fatherly

§69

encouragement filled the community with a joyous confidence, and silent prayers to God and tears of gratitude followed after the much-loved father of the country. It was His Majesty's concern that experiments be carried out in this, at that time, virtually treeless region [excluding the groves already planted] with plantations of trees. And on his last journey he expressed, in Steinbach, his desire that every farmer plant a half dessiatine with trees. In order to fulfill His Majesty's most high wish, Lord Contenius entertained the idea to create a society for this important branch of agriculture. . . . In 1830, the year of his death, von Insov, the Supervisor-General of [all] the colonies, confirmed the "Society for the Furtherance of Forestry, Gardening and Wine Production." Johann Cornies was named as its life-long chairman. Later the title of the society was expanded to include: "to Improve Agriculture and Industry." From 1843 onwards, the Molotschna school system has also come under its jurisdiction by legal charter [expressly in accord with the general school laws of the colony and in co-operation with the spiritual leaders [107] for the greatest possible benefit to all the schools], and once again its title was expanded to include: "and Improvement of the School System." Thus this "society modelled after the free academies" with strong executive powers became the only truly all-encompassing Department of Culture for all of the Russian Mennonites; the Chortitza region was granted a similar Agricultural Society, where Cornies, as a "plenipotentiary of all Mennonites" and later as special deputy of the government, also exercised a considerable authority. In the latter position his jurisdiction reached to the Prischib District and the "Swedish Colony" on the Dnieper; because of his expertise he visited the Kherson (Grossliebentaler) colonies; he was appointed, as we already know, supervisor of the Nogai (as well as the Doukhobors and Molokans) and Jews (settlers in the Province of Kherson): the Mennonite model farmers and supervisors in the Jewish colonies were responsible to the agricultural societies of Molotschna and Chortitza. Already in the 1820s he journeyed to the territory of the nomadic tribes of the Kalmuks at the request of their Supervisor, Faddiiev, in order to advise them on their permanent settlement!

b) The eighteen-year period of the society's history with Cornies at its head is an exceedingly important chapter in the colonies' one-hundred-year existence. Its first goal was to plant trees. However, not only did it spear-head the planting of forests and gardens, but its activity was extended to the following areas: the planting of hedges, of the beautiful tree-lanes from village to village; the four-field system of land cultivation with summer-fallow (every fourth year); the damming of water ponds for purposes of watering cattle and irrigating the valleys (balka) of the steppes; improving the breed of cattle; developing the silk industry which had thrived for several decades (the "Silk Society;"



a) Johann Cornies, Sr.



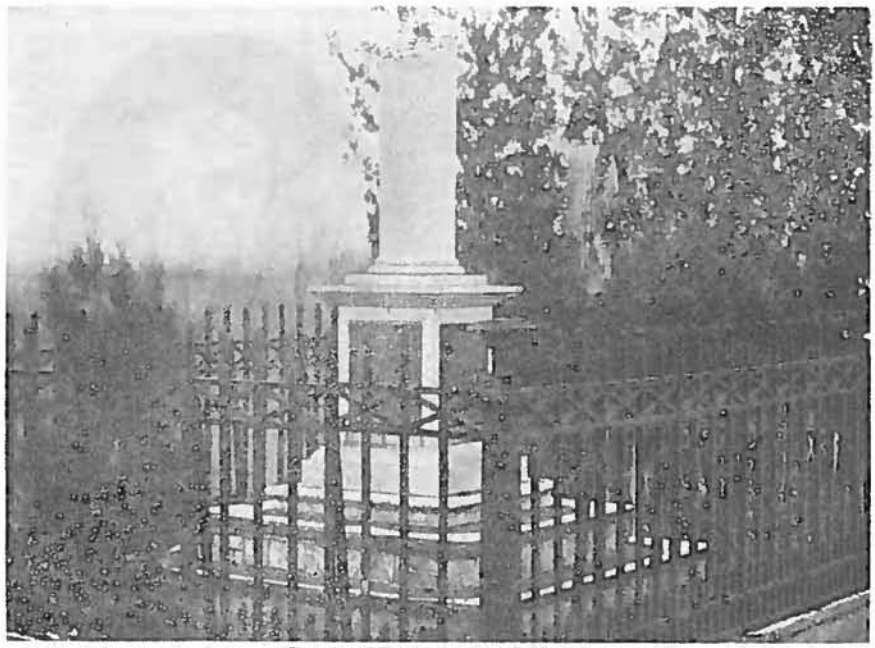
b) Heinrich Heese, Sr.



c) Heinrich Franz, Sr.



d) Philipp Wiebe



Cornies Monument in Ohrloff.

rewarding good spinners and caterpillar breeders); improving and beautifying the style of buildings while making them more fireproof; the planning of new model colonies and possible regulation of the old ones; erecting planned school houses; setting up wise and just regulations for domestic servants; the supervision of neglected children and their care by turning them over to model childless couples or families with few children who would train them until they came of age; in putting lazy adults to work; the improvement of morals and manners amongst the inhabitants; and massive improvement of the school system were all fruits of its labors (primarily, though not only) in the Molotschna Mennonite colonies.

c) How strong and deeply religious (mostly in a misunderstood manner) the initial opposition to the society was can be seen from the closing poem of a religious speech given by a very prominent minister in

1847 in which Cornies is personified as the "enemy and oppressor" of the faithful guardians "of religion" and considered the destroyer of "true religion." The sharp edge, indeed the essential power of this opposition was lost with the departure of Elder Heinrich Wiens in 1847 and the death of the chairman Johann Cornies in 1848. How tenacious and furious this opposition was in its day is demonstrated, among many other anecdotes, by the following true story, verified by narration of an older married daughter and the grey-haired son-in-law of the said opponent of Cornies and his society, both of whom (daughter and son-in-law) we have known to be sincere Christians for years. A farmer and village mayor of a Molotschna colony reported repeatedly that the trees, planted "according to the specifications," instead of growing, all died. In the specific written instructions on how to plant the trees, it had never entered Cornies mind to state that the roots had to be placed in the ground and the branches in the air! Finally the "society," in the person of two to three representatives, as often happened, came to the village mayor T in the village of F in order to investigate the matter at first hand. The mayor led the "society" into the garden and sure enough, all the trees, planted in well-prepared soil, stood with their bone-dry roots in the air and their branches in the ground. The representatives abruptly turned around and left. The Mennonite sense of honor suffered terribly under the consequences: the congregation concerned, a part of the large congregation, was informed by the Agriculture Society of this fact, verified it, and was forced to put the mayor, otherwise a thoroughly honorable man (only such men were elected to the position of mayor), in the ban for disobedience against and contempt for the duly authorized board of directors and the government itself in the form of the society's compulsory orders, indeed of the imperial will [cf. Steinbach]! Thereupon T was physically punished!! The Agriculture Society never allowed a "brother" to suffer a disgraceful punishment: incorrigible laggards, vagabonds, drunkards and rude people were reported [108] to their respective congregations if it did not discover and punish its own sinners. These would then have to excommunicate such a person, either freely or under moral pressure and on the basis of the Word of God, in accordance with undisputed Mennonite teaching and church discipline. Then he would no longer be a brother, but a "heathen and a publican," and he would be punished as such! [109] The same happened to T from F. But now he was to demonstrate what the old Dutch Mennonite blood was capable of doing (according to the family name of the unfortunate person, old Anabaptist-Mennonite martyr-blood flowed in his veins): he lived more than thirty years after this and remained in the ban. He asserted that he had acted in the spirit and with the approval of his church brethren, who had then excommunicated him, and all private appeals by people close to him, that he should confess his fault to the congregation—every effort was made to make the confession

easy for him—proved futile: he lived as one "banned" in his own home and village, he never ate with the "brethren," nor did he attend the church services. His wife was buried—he attended as one set aside: he neither ate nor drank with the mourners. And as such he was also buried. May God judge him graciously! T. as well as Elder H. Wiens were each, in their own way, convinced and honest martyrs of an afflicted religious group which had arisen because of the impoverishment and stunted growth of the church of our fathers! The martyrdom of T. was far more difficult for a Mennonite to bear than that of H. Wiens. It needs to be said here again, however, that the *Kleine Gemeinde,* in spite of its unhealthy Mennonite narrowness and severity, never came into conflict with the Agricultural Society: in fact, the members of the society met the church half-way, allowing its members to paint the wood on their farm buildings blue (according to the *Kleine Gemeinde,* blue was the "duse" or God-pleasing color, which they also used to paint all of the wagons and furniture; even their clothes had to be quite dark in color)—instead of the more usual brighter colors, and replacing the gable of the house facing the street, which was supposed to be made of burned brick but appeared "too proud" to them, with wood gables painted blue. And just as our brethren in France of a hundred years ago were indulged by the fierce lords of the French Assembly with regard to their major religious concerns because of their "meekness," so did the strict lords of the Society and the Supervisory Commission indulge what seems to us the small-minded religious concerns of our *Kleine Gemeinde* brethren. "The meek shall inherit the earth!" The yards, fields, gardens and cattle of the *Kleine Gemeinde* belonged to the best in the colonies. And the honorable Franz Isaak, who lived in those days, asserts that chairman Johann Cornies, who was involved in a major battle with Jakob Warkentin and Heinrich Wiens in 1842 and 1847 (did he have to carry it out in the manner he did?), in 1843 convinced the government to grant the *Kleine Gemeinde* equal status with the other churches!

d) Now, did Johann Cornies never make any mistakes? "Who amongst us does not make mistakes!" Did Menno not make mistakes? ("The marriage ban," etc.). Have our favorites, such as Pastor Wuest, Bernhard Fast, August Lenzmann, Bernhard Harder, Johann Claassen, Abraham Unger, and the favorites of others not made mistakes? Have not "Ohrloff," "Gnadenfeld," the "Kleine Gemeinde," the "Large Congregation" and the "M.B. Church" made mistakes? "All of us have sinned—and come short" (of perfection). In the lawful position assigned him by the highest authorities Johann Cornies was, in his own way and under the circumstances of the time, a small scale version of that which world history has called the "enlightened despot," a dictator who rules for the benefit of his subjects: Duke Ernst the Pious of Gotha, Peter the Great, Frederick II, and Joseph II. Such idealistic men of power perform

great feats but also commit great mistakes![110] Cornies also made mistakes. He was probably not without guilt in the Gnadenfeld matter (F. Lange) or in the matter concerning Elder H. Wiens.[111] The good he has accomplished, however, by far outweighs his mistakes, and we honor him ardently for his accomplishments. We agree with what Johann Claassen[112] said to his brethren: "It is self-evident that we must be model farmers in return for all of the imperial privileges!" (Compare also the letter of Rev. Johann Wall *#62, 2*). We believe everyone must be a model in his given occupation; and where this is not the case, it is a double sin and shame to us,—may it irritate you and me! Menno and Cornies have given us Russian Mennonites, both in Russia and America, our ecclesiastical and cultural character for all time; as yet, however, it is far from perfect! We see in Cornies' reform the healthy body (culture and civic community) for Menno's spirit (the heart of Christianity and church community). And we call upon our more than a hundred-thousand brothers and sisters in Russia and America: Let us remember our two teachers, Menno and Cornies! Let us acquire what we have inherited from our fathers! (According to A. Kroeker's *Family Almanac of 1900,* M.F.S. and P.W.M.)

e) The chairmen of the Agricultural Society of the Molotschna until the division of the Molotschna Mennonite District into those of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld (later "volosts") known to us were: Johann Cornies, Philipp Wiebe (his son-in-law and secretary), David Cornies (his brother) and Peter Schmidt of Steinbach, whose name, after that of Cornies, was most synonymous with that of the "Society," standing for everything that was wise, noble and powerful,[113] as we remember it from the years of our childhood.

f) After the division of the Molotschna Mennonite District into those of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld, then called the Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld Volosts, the following were:

Chairman of the Halbstadt Agricultural Society: 1) Klaas Wiebe, Muensterberg, 2) Heinrich Reimer, Ohrloff, 3) Johannes Wiebe (son of Philipp Wiebe), Ohrloff, 4) Peter P. Neufeld, Liebenau (at the present—1910).

Chairmen of the Gnadenfeld Agricultural Society: 1) Peter Schmidt, Steinbach (the same as above), 2) Gerhard Fast, Rudnerweide, 3) Heinrich Siebert, Conteniusfeld, 4) Peter Bergmann, Mariawohl, 5) David Unruh, Gnadenfeld, 6) Abram Rempel, Gnadenfeld (at the present—1910).

Well-known chairmen and members of the Chortitza Agricultural Society were: Jakob Penner, formerly colony administrator, Franz Pauls, Kronsweide, Heinrich Hildebrand, Einlage, Johann Siemens, David Redekopp, Rosental, David Koop, Chortitza and Jakob Niebuhr, Kronstal (died in 1880, and with him the society came to an end).

D. *The Tsar's Gracious Letter of Acknowledgment and Thanks for Cultural and Patriotic Achievements*

§69(2)

Translation

a) To the Mennonite churches settled along the Molotschna River. Upon testimony of the director of the third department of Crown Lands, Privy Councillor v. Bradky, regarding the excellent order in which he found the Mennonite colonies settled along the Molotschna River, I had the good fortune of bringing the praiseworthy zeal of the Mennonites for the improvement of agriculture and industry and for the establishment of church order and domestic concerns, to the attention of His Majesty. In consideration of the zeal of the Mennonite Church and in order to encourage the same for future endeavors for the common good, it has pleased the Lord Tsar,[114] on February 3, to order that His Majesty's gracious good wishes and acknowledgment be conveyed to the church.

After having received the *ukase* of the ruling senate in this regard, I take pleasure in making known the said royal order to the Mennonite Church. I am assured that the Mennonite colonists, who have been considered worthy of this high token of the royal acknowledgment of their efforts will, through new progress in the area of agriculture and industry as well as the consolidation of order and morality, give me new opportunity to bring this to the attention of His Majesty.

Minister of Crown Lands, Adjutant General Count Kisselev, March 13, 1841. Director v. Bradky

Translation

b) To the Mennonites of the Molotschna District located in the Berdiansk Region.

The presentation made by your leaders to the chairman of the Supervisory Commission for Foreign Settlers of South Russia on August 16, 1848, in which you, in response to the royal manifesto of March 14, 1848, declared your willingness to furnish, gratis, 130 horses for the military, has been taken into consideration by His Majesty the Tsar, and the patriotic feelings expressed thereby have been accepted with special good will. He now commands that the deepest gratitude of His Majesty be conveyed to you as well as being brought to the attention of the general public.

Minister of Crown Lands, Adjutant General Count P. Kisselev.
Director of the first department of Crown Lands
v. Hahn."

(?) 1848.
(Cf. below under "Military Question.")

D.

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED CHRISTIAN ANABAPTIST MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH (M.B. CHURCH) OF 1860 IN THE MIDST OF THE SOUTH RUSSIAN MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD OF DUTCH-PRUSSIAN ORIGIN

XI.
INTRODUCTION

§70 1. We want, as briefly as possible, to survey the course of events which, viewed from a human perspective, brought the "M.B. Church" into being. Although it was not our intention to write everything, we now do so anyway: we did not think the graves old enough to be opened calmly and in cold blood. But since the dear brethren in America have had the courage to publish the documentary history of the "external" events surrounding the establishment of the M.B. Church,[1] and since the author was commissioned to write the "inner" history of the M.B. Church, it is necessary, in order to supplement and correct the record, to write a fuller account of what we originally intended to treat briefly or not at all. These fundamental outlines were, at the same time, merely to present a survey[2] of the much more comprehensive history of the M.B. Church to be published later. The mass of material available for an "inner" history, both with regard to its light and dark aspects, is so surprisingly large that few of the contemporaries, who participated in and partially brought about these events, would believe it. A great number of letters, documents, diaries, "reports," "memoirs," etc. are available. The collection of letters (the ones he received as well as his own) left behind by Johann Claassen of Liebenau, who died in the Kuban,

is especially rich. These letters—as accurate as photographs—of persons who, differing in their persuasions, were involved in the brethren movement, characterize that movement much better than even the official documents. It is our intention to present the most important and essential of this material. We would see the unexpected appearance of the American booklet by Rev. Peter Regehr (and now that long-announced book by Rev. Franz Isaak) and, consequently, the more comprehensive nature of our book from the point of view of the leading of a wise and gracious divine providence. With God's help, we shall be guided by justice and impartiality according to the law of brotherly and universal love, and that which will truly profit the one universal church of Christ in all its parts.

§71 2. The author wishes at the outset to present his judgment with regard to the origin of the M.B. Church reached on the basis of the material, personal recollections and diligent inquiry from the "older generation." a) The organization of a separate "M.B. Church," in the midst of the "South Russian Mennonite Brotherhood," based on the Scriptures and the most essential ideas of Menno, given the secularized state of the largest part of the Russian Mennonites and the inability and partial reluctance of the church councils generally to oppose the corruption, was necessary and proved to be salutary for all of the Russian Mennonites. Generally speaking, however, the founders of the M.B. Church were neither intellectually nor spiritually well-enough prepared for the task: several of the co-founders were decidedly incompetent and were exposed by the subsequent events graciously directed by God; many were finally expelled from the group by the wholesome element; others left of their own accord; still others repented of their mistakes and sins, in the same way in which the whole M.B. Church now and then has openly confessed and condemned its errors (cf. *Confession of Faith,* 1900/1902, "Explanation"),—remaining in the church with modest positions brought on by the errors they had committed. But even some of the better elements, through the fault of individuals who sinned, lost faith in the goodness of the cause and could not again, whether through their own fault or that of the church, be reconciled to it. But to the upright and those who humbled themselves a merciful God granted much grace that through them, as through "broken rods," a situation has arisen where we today have the honor and the duty to co-operate in the work that benefits the entire Mennonite confessional fellowship in Russia and America, and to participate in building God's kingdom generally. But all of those amongst us who sense our inadequacy (it is to be hoped that the great majority of the M.B. Church belongs to this group), say with heartfelt sincerity: Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be glory!

b) May the worthy reader kindly keep this basic perspective of the author in mind as he reads the following, where, God grant, light and shadow may be dispensed with justice.

3. The generally very sad conditions in the Molotschna (Taurida) and Chortitza (Ekaterinoslav) colonies of the Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia can be readily perceived from the preceding account concerning the most recent history of the Mennonites in Prussia and the events in Russia, and will not be elaborated upon in what follows. §72

4. a) Outwardly, the Molotschna church scene took on the following form in 1860: the "Large Congregation" had parishes in Lichtenau, Petershagen, Margenau, Schoensee and Pordenau with Elders Duerk Warkentin in Petershagen and Heinrich Toews in Pordenau. This group comprised more than three quarters of the population [3] of the fifty-five (58) villages [4] (and landed estates) of the "Molotschna Mennonite District" (or area) in the District of Berdiansk, Taurida, with the "Colony Administrative Office" in Halbstadt (actually Neu-Halbstadt) and a mayoral office [5] at the head of every colony (village). §73

The Colony Administrative Office consisted of a colony administrator and two assistants elected for a period of three years, a hired secretary and a few secretarial assistants. A mayor and two assistants, also elected, filled every village office. Besides these there existed the formerly very powerful "Agricultural Society" (a chairman, two vice chairmen, and a recording secretary). For eighteen years (1848-1865) the nearly all-powerful David Friesen of Halbstadt was colony administrator, Peter Schmidt of Steinbach, where the office was located, for many years the chairman of the society. All of the officials, with the exception of the secretaries, were elected by majority vote by the farmers, that is, the landowners, and had to be Mennonites.

All parishes were structured according to the desires of the members who lived, accordingly as they saw fit, in any colony or even outside the colonies on landed estates. An elder might live in one colony, where there was a church, and yet not be active in it but in the church in another place. (Franz Goerz, Jr., the Rudnerweide elder, for example, lived in Gandenfeld.)

Every village had a one-room school; Halbstadt had a one-classroom intermediary, district, or secondary school to train school teachers or secretaries, which later developed into a multi-room, and eventually into a seven-room school (including the two-classroom model school and the two pedagogical classes); Ohrloff had a one-room school run by a society (later three rooms); Gnadenfeld and Steinbach each had a one-room private school (the one in Gnadenfeld—compare above *#52* "Brotherhood

School"—later became a three-room secondary school). The teachers of these "advanced" schools, as they were respectfully called, were: Gustav Rempel in Halbstadt, Hermann Janzen in Ohrloff, Heinrich Franz, Sr., and shortly after 1860, Johann and Friedrich Lange in Gandenfeld and Peter Neufeld in Steinbach. Shortly after 1860, Heinrich Franz had his own private school in Gnadenfled.

The members of the following congregations: Ohrloff-Halbstadt (and since 1863 Neukirch) with Elder (Bernhardt Fast of Tiege, d. 1860, and) Johann Harder of Blumenstein; Rudnerweide—Elder Benjamin Ratzlaff in Rudnerweide, and since 1861 Franz Goerz of Gnadenfeld; Alexanderwohl—Elder Peter Wedel [6] in Alexanderwohl; Gnadenfeld—Elder August Lenzmann in Gnadenfeld; Waldheim—at that time without an elder, and the *Kleine Gemeinde* (here and there erroneously called the "Neukircher") without a church, meeting in private homes—Elder Johann Friesen [7] in Neukirch, lived in all of these villages, more or less scattered among the members of the "Large Congregation" or concentrated in the villages where their churches were located and after which their parishes, that is, their congregations were named. The seven elders, together with their ministers and deacons, constitute the Molotschna Mennonite Council of Church Leaders.

b) The Chortitza District [8] (with its administrative office in Chortitza) consisted of the very large Chortitza Flemish Congregation—Elder Gerhard Dyck, and the small Kronsweide Frisian Congregation—Elder Jakob Hildebrand. It also had a Colony Administrative Office, village mayoral offices and an agricultural society. The Bergtal Colony [9] in the Mariupol District formed a distinct civic and religious community with its own elder (Braun) and civic organization (colony administrative office, village mayoral offices), five villages, which had settled there from the Chortitza District. Eighteen (19) villages constitute the Chortitza District. It has one secondary school (teacher, Heinrich Epp, later elder), every village has a village school, and Einlage has a small private school (that of the teacher Heinrich Heese, Sr.). On rare and important occasions the councils of the Ekaterinoslav and Taurida Mennonites would meet. (Compare *#63(2)*: "Elder List.")

XII.
PASTOR WUEST, THE GREAT REVIVALIST, AN INSTRUMENT OF THE REVIVAL OF THE MOLOTSCHNA MENNONITES AND A PROMOTOR OF THE BROTHERHOOD MOVEMENT

§74 1. The above sections (*#5, 40, 43*ff. and *51*) concerning Tobias Voth, Gnadenfeld and the Brotherhood Movement make it clear what we mean by the term "brethren." Strangely enough, it was the evangelical Pastor Eduard Hugo Otto Wuest, mentioned earlier, who became a mighty promoter of the Brotherhood Movement among the Mennonites. He came from Murrhardt, a rural village in the Kingdom of Wuerttemberg where his parents kept an inn. Wuest, who had been educated at the University of Tuebingen, was a member of the clergy of the Wuerttemberg Lutheran State Church, but since 1845 a minister of the separatist (Wuerttemberg) Lutheran Brethren Church at Neu-Hoffnung, in the vicinity of Berdiansk on the Sea of Azov, founded in the 1820s and consisting of some five-hundred souls scattered about in a number of villages. After a spiritually destitute childhood, during which virtually nothing of the rich treasure of grace and piety at work in the life of the Wuerttemberg people touched him, and an advanced secondary school and university career tainted by indolence, brutality and sin (he prayed for the first time just before his final examinations after six years at the university), he entered upon his ecclesiastical duties—after, to his own surprise, a very good performance in his theological examinations—with all sincerity and an exemplary conduct as the assistant vicar at Neukirchen and Riedenau (1841-44). Not until the third year of his ministry, however, was he able to renounce his sinful behavior (which had taken on a more secretive and refined character) and lead a more dedicated Christian life in faith, word and conduct. As a minister and congregational leader (Bible study leader) he enjoyed great success, won many followers, their trust and brotherly love, but he also became the object of the vicious hatred of his superior pastor and neighboring colleagues (pastors), eventually being unjustly removed from his curacy and hatefully persecuted in that he was forbidden to visit the places where he was loved the most. Even vagrancy fines were imposed upon him to disgrace him. He claims that about one year after such blessed spiritual activity, on New Year's Eve, 1844/45, he experienced the complete joy of sins forgiven and the assurance that he had become a child of God. He maintained a warm relationship with "Pietists," the Moravian Brethren, and the Methodists. At one point he almost went to America as a Methodist minister. But through God's leading and the mediation of Hoffmann, the founder of the Pietist colony of Korntal in

Wuerttemberg, he received and accepted the call of the above-mentioned church at Neu-Hoffnung and thus came to Russia at the age of twenty-eight. (This account is based on Wuest's "autobiography" which he read from the pulpit at the time of his installation in Neu-Hoffnung, in which he, as in his inaugural sermon, in our opinion too unsparingly and severely, exposed himself before the new congregation.) Physically Wuest was a tall and stout man, his voice strong and sonorous; his outward appearance was friendly and attractive. It was said of him that anyone who associated with him had to love him, or, on the other hand, because of his decided Christian stance—hate him, depending upon the inner attitude of the person in question to the Christian faith. The church was already full to overflowing at the occasion of his installation sermon, given in Neu-Hoffnung on September 28, 1845; many Mennonites, who had already associated with the Wuerrtemberg Pietists, were among those in attendance. (Cf. above, "Gnadenfeld.")

§75 2. In order to shed some light on Wuest's character and activity, we present some written evaluations by his contemporaries.

a) The late Brother Jakob Reimer of Felsental, a long-time resident of Gnadenfeld and member of that congregation, who died as a leader of the M.B. Church in Wiesenfeld, describes the Brotherhood Movement during Wuest's time in his "Report" of 1884, written to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the M.B. Church on January 6, 1885: ". . . A revival, especially amongst the Mennonite villages in the District of Berdiansk, took place during the 1840s and '50s, brought about by the existing believers who were in contact with the Wuerttembergers in the vicinity of Berdiansk where a devout pastor by the name of Wuest dwelt. He worked actively in the Lord's vineyard and, without discrimination as to confession, sought to win souls for the Lord Jesus. The Gnadenfeld Mennonite congregation, together with the "Planers" (the Lutheran settlers in the District of Mariupol not far from Berdiansk), conducted missionary endeavors and annual mission festivals. Even Prischib[10] did not remain untouched, and Pastor Landesen of Kharkov (cf. *#52:* J. Claassen's travels on behalf of his school) came to Gnadenfeld and Neu-Hoffnung several times for the mission festival. We Mennonite brethren began to meet together one Saturday afternoon of every month, and until 1858 (cf. *#52:* "Brotherhood School Dispute") Pastor Wuest participated enthusiastically in these meetings. Our purpose was to strengthen one another in the faith, to take cognizance of or admonish one another to conduct ourselves as worthy members of the body of Christ, whose treasure is in heaven, not on earth. We also wanted to learn to know each other in our depravity and Christ in His boundless love. Oh,

these were often blessed afternoon hours during which our hearts were filled with Jesus' love and we were fused together in Him. The alliance of believers reached as far as Odessa and the surrounding villages [colonies] wherever believing souls were to be found. I myself made a tour of these villages with two other brethren [Johann Claassen and Wilhelm Bartel] in 1853 on which we unitedly received many blessings from the Lord. Later a few also came to visit us. But the enemy of the soul could tolerate this no longer and so he filled the elders and ministers as well as the respectable church-goers with envy, and these reported it to the authorities, who in turn circulated a petition: to expel Pastor Wuest from the villages in a civil manner.[11] Pastor Wuest was not allowed to preach in our churches or private homes. And although Lenzmann, our elder, had earlier fellowshipped with him—he preaching there and Wuest in our church—he nevertheless allowed himself to be intimidated by the others [elders]. Thereafter, when Pastor Wuest attended the monthly Saturday meetings, he dispensed with the customary address, which he or one of us who were particularly close to him, had formerly given in the presence of all the brothers and sisters. Now, after we had sung a hymn and prayed, the host would read a passage of Scripture. The leader [of the local brethren] would then pose a question, whereupon the dear pastor would take over the conversation, explaining the question to us in the presence of our chief shepherd Jesus Christ [as a simple brother of the group might do]; and we were richly blessed, strengthened and refreshed, even rebuked in our spirit, through the Holy Spirit, and we took courage, determined to live for the Lord and continue to walk in His ways. He continued in this way for some years, whereupon the enemy attempted to disrupt the work from within by creating dissensions among the brethren" . . . [Because of differing religious viewpoints and because of the "Brotherhood School"—above *##51* and *53*].

b) The late Elder Heinrich Huebert of Liebenau, who died in the Kuban, tells the following story in his "Recollections of the Early Years of our M.B. Church, 1884," written for the twenty-fifth anniversary history: ". . . Thus it happened, through the guidance of Him who directs the hearts of kings as the water of the brooks, that our Mennonite people were allowed to settle in this vast Russia in 1804 [the Molotschna colonies]. Even though considerable progress had been made in regard to farming, planting and the building of houses, there was hardly a trace of a fellowship of faith according to the Gospel, as we now know it, to be found; for a rude and immoral behavior often manifested itself during festive occasions, at which even the ministers were present, which was completely at odds with the character of the "quiet in the land" [as the Mennonites were known]. How far this could have gone—God alone knows! But His eternal love found a solution. [He

recounts the developments under Elder Bernhard Fast and Tobias Voth, Huebert's teacher in Ohrloff, which have already been described above. Until 1860, Huebert was a member of the Ohrloff congregation.] In the 1840s Pastor Wuest, a remarkable revivalist who soon drew the wrath of the ministers and pastors upon himself, made his appearance among the Wuerttembergers. Mission meetings and mission festivals were held, attended by visitors from far and near who often experienced a blessed fellowship. During a trip to Odessa, where he conducted morning and evening devotions in the German colonies—for he was forbidden to preach—he had found many attentive listeners. So deeply had the good news affected them and so moved were they by it that one of them had stood up and spoken the following words: 'Dear Savior, You have a big heart, I have a small one; I jump into your heart. Brethren, follow me!' When he [Wuest] related this incident to us, he declared that this was how he wished things to be, that the Gospel might move souls to be free and spontaneous. Yet, no matter how good and beautiful this might appear, it nevertheless led some in the wrong direction in that they believed they were acting according to the mind of Christ if they followed their emotions, expressing them with outward gestures and jumping and shouting for joy. Among these were men of no mean talents, and thus many soon began to follow them. Pastor Wuest realized quite clearly that the Lord, as a result of this attitude, did not receive less of the fruit of the lips; yet he also saw danger in it, which did not fail to appear later. Nothing could remedy the situation any more: the little flock, happy for such a long time, was now split into two camps, the first of which came to be called 'Huepfer' by the world. A number of Mennonites also inclined to this party."

c) The late August Lenzmann of Gnadenfeld writes to the publisher of the *Mennonitische Blaetter,* March 16, 1863: ". . . Pastor Wuest, mentioned in the above-named article in the *Friedensglocke,* was nevertheless a talented, distinguished, and blessed instrument in the hand of the Lord amongst the separatists who had settled near Berdiansk. Indeed, his zeal drove him beyond the designated limits of his own congregation in order to win souls for his Lord and Savior—to whom he clung with all his heart—among the Mennonites and the surrounding Lutheran congregations. At the same time, however, one cannot deny that for a time the favorite theme of his sermons was the teaching of the free grace of God in Christ Jesus. Unfortunately, the spiritual food offered the ignorant and inexperienced masses was not always imparted with the necessary Christian wisdom. This gave occasion to those inclined toward fanaticism—who, although not willfully, also naturally misunderstood him—to move in a direction which could only lead to their own destruction if they did not return to sanity in time. In spite of this I must confess to the glory of God that the memories of the

brotherly fellowship, in which I stood with the dear Pastor Wuest until his departure from the militant into the triumphant church, will always be blessed ones." [12] [The complete letter follows under XXV.]

d) The late evangelical Lutheran Pastor Dobbert of Prischib, Molotschna, who died in Zarkoie Selo, wrote as follows to his superiors in July, 1864, concerning Wuest: ". . . Much was said of this man at one time; friend and foe alike made much-to-do about him. But one day it will be revealed how many of the accusations raised against him were true. One cannot deny, and in this friend and foe agree, that he was a man of extraordinary talents; the power of his speech was both charming and convincing. At the same time he was also a person who had allowed himself to be captivated by the love of Jesus; his words inflamed because he directed his listeners away from the emptiness and despair of their own hearts to the fullness of divine mercy, which had been revealed in the Savior on Golgotha, as the central and focal point of all of God's dealings with the lost and the stray. Years later a colleague, in whose church Wuest had been a guest speaker, told me about the impact, upon him and everyone else who had heard him, of his powerful witness. In addition, Wuest was an out and out man of the people; affable and friendly in their company, he disliked being alone and seldom was alone; and he always knew how to exploit the slightest opportunity to touch upon the spiritual condition of the individual and to direct him to the one thing that really mattered. Such times received their special appeal through a wealth of wonderful songs and melodies which he had at his disposal. Frivolous people, scoffers at the truth were taken aback and became serious; rough and insolent sinners became reflective; those, who were concerned about their soul's salvation, quickly gathered around him from far and near; in the entire South: from Odessa to the Caucasus, from the Crimea to Kharkov, indeed his contacts reached as far as St. Petersburg; he was assailed from all sides with invitations and requests; and he utilized every opportunity that presented itself, not because of ambition, as he was frequently accused, but because he wanted to work as long as it was day for the kingdom of the Lord, whom he loved because He had first loved him. Whoever is informed about our conditions in the South, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church as well as amongst the Mennonites, will not be surprised at such an influence upon the hearts of the people. From out of the midst of these people, who are moreover also divided into various and sundry kinds of churches, voices are being heard which bemoan the deep-seated moral decay and call for admonition and renewal. Here in the territory of the [Lutheran] church, the masses, who had immigrated from various regions and who had by and large degenerated in body and soul, had first to be educated to a better order of things; that could not happen all at once; schools

were established only years later and even then there was a widespread dearth of good teachers. Large congregations had only one minister (when eighteen colonies are served by one minister, and a sickly and decrepit one at that, can one speak of the spiritual care of the individual?), who, though he were a faithful servant, only too often lacked the necessary vigor and joy because of his isolated position and the consequent absence of fellowship with colleagues which could bring mutual encouragement and stability. The clash of spirits could not be avoided; unrest began to stir the masses; even the malice from below began to raise its head. Those, who fundamentally neither desired the faith nor wished to know it, to whom the Word of the Cross was a stumbling block, and to whom contrition and repentance—the circumcision of the heart—was a yoke of the priests by which they bound people, rose in revolt; they claimed there was too much praying, and the call: Work out your salvation with fear and trembling—was regarded to be fanaticism by these people. 'The church is in danger'—was the outcry of the day. They were not referring to the condition of the church which was adorned as a bride for the lamb and had its lamps prepared for the time of the midnight call: 'The bridegroom comes'—but to a church which their own self-conceit had dreamed up. And when questionable abuses cropped up in Pastor Wuest's immediate environs, the baby was thrown out with the bathwater; stories which I would rather not repeat, were concocted and retold as the gospel truth. Against this man, who should probably rather have been included among the apostolic order mentioned in Rom. 15:20, people rose up with great malice. At the same time, however, the church created the appearance of tolerating sin in her midst (open adultery should still be disposed of with an admonition of the father confessor), of opposing the call to repentance, to faith and to sanctification, because she did not wish to confess her own weaknesses and shortcomings and remedy them wherever possible. This confused the consciences of many and gave occasion to the others to slander her, saying: the church has become a Babel from which we must separate ourselves. I must mention here that Foell, a consistorial councillor and pastor at Hochstaedt [a parish in the Lutheran colonies of Molotschna, apart from Prischib the oldest church center], in spite of repeated demands, did not sign the accusations raised against Wuest, and the late Pastor Landesen of Kharkov always remained in warm fellowship with Wuest. . . ." (Cf. further *#170.*)

§76 3. Pastor Wuest's Theology and Message. a) These testimonies of four witnesses concerning Wuest shall suffice: two "brothers" of outstanding importance, a Mennonite elder from the time when the struggle with the newly organized M.B. Church was still carried on with great intensity, and another who, until his death, remained a good

"church" Lutheran pastor. If, in addition, we also present his inaugural sermon, we will gain a true-to-life picture of this worthy man, who did not remain without shortcomings in his ministry. Aside from his inaugural sermon,[13] we also possess a funeral address, three Christmas and ten Passion sermons of his in print, all delivered between 1845 and 1852. According to everything we have and know about him, Wuest retained the theology he espoused in his inaugural sermon throughout his active career. Only, as he grew older, he naturally became more level-headed and temperate, as the above testimonies indicate. Wuest's delivery was that of a fiery witness of the full, free, and ever-present grace of God in Christ: "Christ the Crucified." He did not preach the doctrine of sanctification, which he personally believed in and practiced, either systematically (a sign of the times), or in the right proportion to his joyous and in itself purely evangelical message of grace; as a consequence, because of the lack of a balance between justification and sanctification in his preaching, there was something not quite evangelical about his ministry. This had to manifest itself in his circle of friends, the more so because of his lively temperament and great, though noble and well-bred, naivete. Some deformity was inevitable when uneducated persons with little capacity for rational thought, an inclination toward fanaticism and much blood and thunder, accepted Wuest's message of grace in a superficial and one-sided manner and did not allow themselves to be sanctified by it as he did; even upright believers were caused to fall by this message, but, like St. Peter, were helped back to their feet again. The same happened to a number of our older brethren, as we will make clear. But the others, who possessed the joy but not the obedience and self-denial in the discipleship of the "loving Savior," stumbled on this rock of offence and were destroyed, as Kappes named below and some from our own ranks. Still a third group existed which, if saved—God alone knows—then only after a life of uncertainty and joylessness and as brands plucked from the fire, after having long preached and worshipped joy instead of Christ. Some, vacillating from one extreme to another, are still[14] seeking joy and consolation in Christian (?) things, though not in Christ Himself. The message of the dearly departed will reveal, to the thoughtful and impartial reader, a correct and well-rounded picture of the person himself; and we are convinced that the image arouses a warm love and respect, though not without Christian and objective criticism.

b) The Mennonite Brethren Church must actually look upon Pastor Wuest as her second reformer: Menno built the house in which we live, on the one foundation (I Cor. 3:11 was Menno's motto). After narrow interpretations, differences over small things, and numerous divisions had weakened Menno's family (cf. *#9* above: "Dutch," separation, etc.) and diverted it from its central focus—Christ living in the heart by faith, one's life being an open letter of Christ, proclaiming his

name to the ends of the earth, even to the point of giving one's life to win the world for Christ" (Menno), and after externally "correct doctrine" and morality had replaced true faith and its inevitable fruits of sanctification in most hearts, even in those of the better ones in the churches of our fathers (not to speak of the morally weak elements in its bosom)—rationalism (belief in reason) and later indifferentism (religious indifference) gradually captured the most influential and numerous members of this Menno-family, the Dutch Church. Our rural Prussian churches were left with an ecclesiastical, doctrinally correct, moral formalism (always, however, with the exception of Elijah's "7000"). Thus the good house of Menno had become practically desolate and empty and was about to collapse. As we have already seen, new life had flowed into individual groups of the Menno-family through evangelical Pietism and Herrnhut. Pastor Wuest was that person who, in this succession of renewing factors, contributed the most before the organization of the M.B. Church. Vital air and warmth, food and drink were brought into the impoverished house. Revived and strengthened, we found the courage to renew the house according to the old plan, on the old foundation. During a later period, Baptists, these "Pietists baptized on their faith", as one could designate them in an idealistic association with Wuest and Pietism, provided very useful services in this renewal and new reorganization. Just as we placed Menno Simon's "Ausgang aus dem Papsttum" (Withdrawal from the Catholic Church), the best of his works, at the beginning of our story of the Mennonites, so we place Wuest's inaugural sermon at the beginning of the section on the M.B. Church. Next to God's Word and His Spirit, Menno and Wuest have actually made the M.B. Church what it is and will be in the Church of Christ. If the joyous doctrine of justification is overly predominant in Wuest's Christian teaching, it counterbalances Menno's very serious, somewhat melancholy theology, which is, however, based on justifying grace, and in their amalgamation, the two streams achieve an apostolic balance. Evangelical Pietism in its wholesome essence has, like renewal, a harmonious effect on Mennonitism, just as Mennonitism is the critique and complement of Lutheranism. During their earliest period, both seemed to be mutually exclusive. In reality, together they form a whole when balanced in an apostolic arrangement. And as such a unified balance, and therefore purified whole, they were to lead the largely deteriorated and impoverished Christianity of the West during the Middle Ages, back to its source. In the meantime, they long regarded it as their duty to condemn one another absolutely. This error is to be corrected,[15] by the Alliance and fellowship movements on a broader scale and the M.B. Church on a smaller scale, each in its own way and sphere of influence. The old "Brethren," who remained true to the M.B. Church, have always emphasized Wuest's extremely great importance. Everyone will agree

with the above after reading and comparing the two pieces, "Withdrawl" (*#3*) and "Inaugural Sermon." That consistent Mennonite believers, who heard Wuest's ideas about the separation of believers and unbelievers, about the chasm which God has fixed, soon thought of the church of "Brethren who were baptized on their faith," is self-evident. Hereafter follows a verbatim rendering:

§76(2)

INAUGURAL SERMON
of
Eduard Hugo Otto Wuest
presently minister in the
Colony Neu-Hoffnung, given on
September 28, 1845
Moscow
Printed by the University Printing Press
1850

"When I count the days, when I yet lay in sin, O, how my soul shudders, because I regret every day! Do I count the days of grace since the Lord called me, I hardly know what to say: Such mercy is too deep!"

Sermon

1. In the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 40:6 it is written: "A voice says, cry! And I said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows over it; surely the people is grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever." In this hour, as I step into your midst as your minister for the first time, I experience what the prophet of old did. From all sides I hear, "Preach!" From above comes the voice of Him who has called me here: "Preach!" You require it of me: "Preach!" I ask with the prophet, "What shall I preach?" The answer returns: "All flesh is grass; the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand for ever." My beloved, I must proclaim this eternally-abiding word of the Lord to you.

2. Here before me lies the Bible. It is this Word, filled with holy truths, which I must proclaim to you. It is required of me by the voice from above. You require this of me. But, beloved, where shall I begin and where shall I end? Where shall I begin today and where right now, in this hour, in which you are waiting with your attention fixed with such



a) Pastor Eduard Wuest (1817-1859).



b) Minister August Liebig, (born in 1836 in Bernstein/Neumark).

great anticipation upon your new pastor. Where do I find the center, the focal point of the Holy Scriptures, concerning which just now, in this momentous hour, I desire to speak to you? I find it, praise God, upon every page of this sacred document, Jesus Christ, the crucified,[16] my and your Lord and Savior, the One who has borne and blotted out my sins and your sins, who is my peace and your peace, our rest, salvation, life and happiness! For this reason, in this my first sermon that I am preaching to you, I join in the words of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 2:2: "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

3. I desire to speak somewhat more to you concerning this Word, and to show you from the same how I intend to administer my office, which I have just now entered into. From my course of life,[17] with which, my beloved, I have acquainted you, you can gather this much, that you will not have in me an especially learned pastor. But one thing I know, one thing I have learned in a school, a school in which a person

can learn more in a few days than in all higher schools put together in many years; in the school of the Holy Spirit I have learned that a man without a living faith in Jesus Christ, the crucified, is eternally lost and damned, and that this Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners, and I am the foremost of sinners (I Tim. 1:15); in that school I have learned that "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12); and not only the empty name have I learned in this school, no, the power, the life, the consolation, the quickening, the bliss, the joy, the happiness, the glory that is contained in this sweet precious name of Jesus! I have been able to experience these in my heart and life through God's almighty grace, so that I can now say: I know Jesus Christ the crucified. I do not say I know and know intimately His teaching, His history, His life, His wonders and signs which He did; no, I say: Him, personally, this Jesus Christ, the crucified, I know and know intimately. I know Him as the One who can save lost sinners, under the wrath of hell, and can liberate and set free out of the claws of the terrible enemy, Satan. I know Him as the One who can give rest and peace to the unhappy soul, that has run itself weary in the world, and the One who calls all who labor and are heavy-laden unto Himself, in order to refresh them and to allow them to find rest for their souls under His easy yoke and His light burden (Matt. 11:28-30). I know Him as the bread of life, as the heavenly manna, that allows the partakers thereof to live eternally (John 6:48-51). I know Him as the One that has, for the thirsty soul, a living water, which causes a man never to thirst again (John 4:14). This Jesus Christ, the crucified, I know and know Him as my one and all! O, to love Him, I thirst; to serve Him, I long after. Him alone I fear to grieve; for Him alone I live and die.

4. And this Jesus I intend to preach and make known to you. Him will I exalt and seek to depict before your eyes in His self-sacrificing love, in His cursed and martyred form, as the Savior of sinners, even as I have experienced Him. We can be certain that if man, if a group of learned doctors and professors, had had to devise a plan for the redemption of a poor mankind sighing under its burden of sin (no place would have been found) for a suffering, a dying Messiah, particularly one dying on a cursed tree. But God be praised, it is in this way that He has been "made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (I. Cor. 1:30). Indeed Christ, even the crucified, is the focal point around which my preaching of the gospel shall also revolve. With Him I will confront the unrepentant sinner. O, in the cross of Christ, in truth, there lies a marvellous power to repentance. The law, which in most cases plays the leading role in repentance sermons, indeed brings a knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20), but there lies no power unto salvation in the law, for it works only wrath (Rom. 4:15). Only beneath the cross of

Calvary can the sinner be broken and brought to godly sorrow, tears and contrition. I will hold Christ the crucified before the eyes of him who is covetous and greedy, because of whose greed Christ hung naked and exposed upon the cross. A person greedy of honor, who desires only to be renowned in the world, will I lead to the judgment hall, where his Savior stands before Pilate, surrounded by a mocking crowd, atoning for his greed of honor, as He stands arrayed in a purple robe with a crown of thorns on His head. And before the eyes of the sensualist will I present the martyr form of Him who hangs upon the cross, with nail-pierced hands and feet, dripping blood and endures the terrible pain because of our evil lusts. In this way shall the Word of the Cross bring the sinner to a halt in his sinful ways, that he may consider in this his time, what serves for his peace. Christ shall become his wisdom.

5. But once the conscience of the sinner has been awakened, once he perceives the bottomless pit that opens itself at his feet, once he dares no longer even to raise his sinful eyes to a grieved God, and once the world, which till now beguiled him to sin and served his evil desires, abandons him heartlessly to his agony, then it is that I point him to Jesus Christ, the crucified, who alone can help him, who gave His life for the redemption of the sinner, and shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins. To such I speak comfort: Peace, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1) and His blood cleanses humbled, repentant, returning sinners from all sin (John 1:7). What else could I think of, what more effective remedy could I find in heaven and on earth, for the contrite and such as are troubled about their eternal salvation, than the Word from the Cross? O, how I shall rejoice with the angels in heaven if I can lead such a sinner to stand beneath the cross and can say to him, "Look, you poor sinner, so deserving of death, there the Son of God dies for you, and your debt is now paid!" And how I will exult with such a sinner when he commences to sing:

> Christ's own blood and righteousness
> My beauty are, my glorious dress.
> Accepted in them before God I shall stand,
> When eternally I dwell in that heavenly land!

Yes, Christ's own blood and righteousness, indeed! That is what a poor sinner needs. And I shall present Him, who by God Himself has been made our righteousness, to all poor sinners.

6. But justified sinners also need nothing more urgently than a Savior, who has died for them. The daily stumblings, that take place in the life of one who is born again, can only be forgiven through the blood of the Crucified (and He is also) the only One in whose strength daily sanctification progresses. Does the fear of loss lead you to be unfaithful

to truth, making a lie seem advisable, then I will point you to the One, who, before Caiaphas and Pilate, gave a testimony concerning the truth and bled for it. Does your love want to grow cold because of the thanklessness and hatred that you experience, and as your feelings suffer keenly under insult do your ears become dull to the command of the Lord: "Bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44), then I will point you to Him, who did not threaten when He suffered, who on Calvary prayed for His persecutors and died on the cross for sinners. Does your obedience seek to avoid difficult demands and to reject sacrifice, then I will remind you of Him, whose meat it was to do the will of His heavenly Father, not only in life, but who was obedient unto death, even the death on the cross. This sight, I think shall shame your cowardice, shall inspire anew your courage, and shall inflame you to sacrificial love. Christ the crucified shall become to you, that for which He was made by God, namely your sanctification.

7. But I do not step into your midst today only as a minister of the righteousness that has merit before God, no, I will also need to be a comforter to you in your sorrow, in your pain and in your afflictions. This earth is a vale of lamentations and the pathway of the Christian through this wilderness to the heavenly Canaan is a pilgrimage of tears. Therefore a person has need of many consolations, and the most agreeable and the most loved part of my office is the comfort that I need to bring to the suffering. But even for them I again have nothing else, no other comfort, than alone Jesus Christ, the crucified, the One "who in every respect was tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb. 4:15), about whom is written: "For because He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted." Beloved, this faithful High Priest was tempted in all things. There is no suffering, no pain, no affliction, that has not passed over Him, no grief that would not have moved His divine soul. Therefore He is also the true source of comfort for all that labor and are heavy laden, as He invites them to Himself, that they might find in Him rest and comfort for their souls. What He suffered, He suffered for us and for our sakes, and as He receives His own into the fellowship of His suffering, so He also receives them into the fellowship of His glory. Therefore "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (II Tim. 2:12). Only draw near, all you sorrowful, disconsolate, and tempted! Whatever suffering you must bear, whatever grief weighs upon you, the Savior is acquainted with it! Do you perhaps sigh under the burden of poverty; do you perhaps belong to those, that in looking upon a small group of hungry children crying for bread, lose courage and say: What shall we eat, what shall we drink, what shall we wear? (Matt. 6:31). O, my beloved, behold Jesus Christ, the crucified, who Himself did not have a place to lay His head (Matt. 8:20), "though

He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6, 7). Behold Him, who "though He was rich, became poor for your sakes, that through His poverty, ye might become rich"—yes, so poor that in His death He had not even one thread on His body. Do you suffer under the hatred, the resentment, the animosity, the scorn and scoffing and persecution of your fellowmen? O, look to Him, who had to stand before Caiaphas and Pilate as the one most wretched, most despised, scorned, scoffed, spat upon, and assaulted with feet. Behold Him, the King of Glory, before whom even a Barabbas was preferred. Then you will receive new courage to carry your suffering and to pray:

Come then take us everyone
To share the suffering and the crown.

He, Himself, entered through suffering into the joys of His Kingdom. Would you have it otherwise? Do you not know that the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord? (Matt. 10:24). When the pains of sickness depress you into the depths, then I direct your gaze to the cross, on which for six long hours the Saviour, Jesus Christ, hung, enduring the most awful pains in His sensitive body. And do you fall into inner temptation or sorrow of the soul? Do you have any particular heaviness upon your heart? O, see! There in Gethsemane kneels One, whose soul is sorrowful, even unto death, from whom the sweat drops of blood drip down upon the ground; there your Savior prays, wrestles, despairs and laments for you and in your place: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). And do you come into such a despairing and dark hour, that you must feel yourself forsaken by God Himself, then hear the lament out of the mouth of your crucified Redeemer: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). Through the suffering of death our Lord is gone into glory. He is gone into heaven over Gethsemane and Golgatha. For us He has also occupied it, and through a look at our redeeming forerunner, we draw into ourselves the power of the world to come; we know: His way is our way; His going out is our going out; His goal is our goal. We know and are acquainted with the great and glorious reckoning that the Apostle Paul used in Rom. 8:18, that: "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." And when we have arrived at the goal of our journey and shall cast a look back at the afflictions and trials through which we have come in the power of the blood of Christ, when we have triumphed, and more than triumphed, because of the will of Him who loved us (Rom. 8:37), and can then sing:

Now have in truth we triumphed
Through Jesus' blood alone
Who in the vilest hour
The greatest deeds has done;

yes, when once to the great: "It is finished!" which tore the veil of the temple in two from top to bottom, made the earth quake, and rent the rocks, so that the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints that were sleeping arose (Matt. 27:51-53); when to that "It is finished!" that was heard from Calvary and from there echoes back over the 1800 years into our sinful hearts, that they too quake, and breaks the hardness of their rocky surface so that new life may come forth; yes, when to that great: "It is finished" (John 19:30), the other: "It has come to pass," is added, which comes forth from heaven, from the throne; when the seventh angel has poured out the vial of his wrath into the air and the whole hostile might of the Antichrist, that until now has risen against the kingdom of Jesus Christ, crumbles; when the believers experience in the glorious, visible, triumphant appearance of this Kingdom, the fullest, most comprehensive answer to their daily petition: Deliver us from evil!—then only, beloved, will they comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and the length and the depth and the height (Eph. 3:18) of the Word, that Christ is made unto us redemption!

8. This Christ, my beloved, who has been made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, Him I wish not only to hold before your eyes, but to engrave, to preach, and to pray into your hearts. For of what benefit is the Christ of the Bible to us, if He is not also in our hearts. The heart, I say, the heart is the place in which this costly treasure, this precious pearl, this jewel, this gift from heaven belongs. I will not only preach Jesus Christ the crucified to you from the pulpit, I will carry Him after you into your homes, I will seek you out at your daily occupations, I will, where necessary, also seek you out on the fields, and always, and never anything else, hold before you Jesus Christ, the crucified, for besides this I know nothing—only alone Jesus Christ, the crucified. Therefore do not let it disturb you if again and again I bring the same message, if everything centers around that great theme. Do not let it estrange you, if I often direct this question to you personally: How do you stand in your heart toward the Savior? Because that is and remains the main issue, whether we have Christ, the crucified, dwelling in our hearts or not. From you, beloved, I request—and because of yourselves you cannot give me what I desire, I pray that you may have love, obedience, tender-heartedness, to receive the Word, which can save your souls. As an enemy of mere outward and nominal Christianity, I say to you at the outset: "Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

9. I do not hide from myself the fact that, if I declare the Word to you in the way that I have promised before God today, there will be no lack either of conflict or of opposition. I know certainly what the Lord Himself said: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth: I have not come to bring peace but a sword" (Matt. 10:34). And what Christ says here about Himself generally, applies especially concerning Him, the crucified. Already the cross of Calvary was the wall of separation between scoffing and bankrupt sinners. For one of the malefactors that was crucified with Him, mocked Him and said, "If you are the Christ, save yourself and us." And the malefactor on the other side said to Jesus: "Lord, remember me, when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:39ff). Christ, the crucified, divides sharply, and everyone who proclaims Him, must preach about two kinds of people. The Word of the Cross is a sharp, two-edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). And because I want to use this Word among you, I cannot call: Peace! Peace! where there is no peace (Jer. 8:11). You yourselves have written in your letter, desiring that I might raise my voice like a trumpet, which is not so easily silenced. Right, beloved, that is also my conviction. I know not how to speak beautifully and artfully. To arrange my words according to the rules of oratory is not my specialty. But as well as I can, I will call and cry to rouse the souls from the sleep into which the devil has lulled them, in order to frighten them back from the abyss towards which they are drifting and hastening in their false security, frivolity and self-deception. I know from personal experience what it means to serve the devil. I also know his wages and fervently pity every soul that yet remains in his service. Most certainly, here and there, being aroused out of sin's sleep, out of one's own self-righteousness, will not please many, but I cannot help this; guidance to the heavenly kingdom requires harsh methods. Therefore I voice my expectation in advance: that there shall be much rumbling among you. There shall be rumblings in the hearts, rumblings in the houses and families, rumblings in the whole congregation. In this way I want to become a real rumble-preacher, in order that through such rumblings and dissatisfactions the way to the blessed peace of the children of God might be entered, in order that the Word also be fulfilled for me, that the prophet Isaiah records in chapter 52, verse 7, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that publish glad tidings," namely that peace, to which one comes only through inward disquietude.

10. For I also expect that in this church which I now may call my church, that the Word of the Lord will be fulfilled, the Word that He speaks in Matt. 10:35, 36: "For I am come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against

her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be those of his own household." Christ is an enemy of all half-heartedness. He has given Himself completely for the sinner; the sinner must give himself completely to Him. A total Savior as over against a total sinner, that is the great exchange that can be transacted. With this distinct either-or of our loving Savior, I also step into your midst with my watchword. Either—or! No third way! "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be damned," are the words of our loving Savior in Mark 16:16, and with this word He divides all mankind into two classes, into believers and unbelievers. Cursed is everyone who adds a third class. Therefore, beloved, in my very first sermon, I send out to you this call: either—or. Either a believer or an unbeliever; either converted or unconverted; either a natural man or a regenerate man; either a sheep or a goat; either on the right or on the left; either the straight gate, the narrow way or the wide gate and the broad way; either flesh or Spirit; either God or mammon; either Christ or Belial; either blessing or curse; either life or death; either salvation or condemnation; either heaven or hell! There is no third! This choice I will continually place before you, neither will I permit you to remain together, believer and unbeliever, but you shall become separated according to the words of Paul in II Cor. 6:14ff.: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" For that reason I am preaching faction and am no friend of the pitiable unity of believers and unbelievers, by which the believer loses his faith and the unbeliever does not come to a knowledge of his belief. Especially in these days, when the time of decision has come so very near, and, as it seems to me, the Lord has in a special way sent His angel, in order to gather the tares into sheaves and the good grain into His barns. Therefore especially I call out with all my might: "You believers, you partakers of the inheritance and of salvation, go out from the world, separate yourselves from the unbelievers, and even if they bear the name of 'pietist' or 'brethren,' avoid them and separate yourselves from them, the wretched, pitiable half-believing, the hypocrites, mere outward and mouth Christians, who, though they say 'I believe,' do not have it in their hearts. If there are such among you, who with every decisive "either-or" immediately become fearful and anxious, who approve of outward discipline and order, but are an enemy of the inner decisive life from God, such who always strive to reconcile the big factions that stand against each other, and seek to fill the chasm that the Lord Himself has set between believers and unbelievers; those who for the sake of outward peace and comfort which

one ordinarily enjoys in indecisiveness, putting at stake the eternal rest that remains for the people of God (Heb. 4:9), who have come out of Egypt; if there are such among you—and these will not be lacking—who fear every decisive word in order that they may experience no hostility from men, who would rather be the whole world's friend than God's committed lover, people who do not like it when a differentiation is made in the way the Lord Himself so sharply made it, people who want everything placed in one pot, all who carry the name of Christian, Pietist or Brethren, who wish to be acknowledged as such in deed and in truth, that they might be so much more easily accepted with their professed and half-hearted faith; all these—I tell you in advance—my speech will neither suit nor please. But I have not come from Germany to Russia to please them, but much more to preach Jesus Christ, the crucified, the comfort of poor sinners and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence for the self-righteous, the proud, the indecisive, and the hypocrites (John 8:14; I Peter 2:8).

11. But now, beloved, when I look back over that which for the first time I have preached to you today; when I look back upon all my promises, upon all my many "I wills," that I have spoken today; and when I catch a glimpse of my own heart, then I cannot help but become afraid and my courage almost leaves me. I must shepherd five hundred souls. I must guide them as the under-shepherd of the great chief and arch-shepherd, Jesus Christ, to the wells of living water and out of my own being must flow rivers of living water (John 7:38), and alas, in my heart it is often as void, as melancholy, as dead, as parched, as dry and desolate as the wide steppes through which I travelled in coming to you. O, I can keep none of these things which I have promised you today, when I look upon myself. I must become a liar before you all, if the Lord does not have mercy upon me. Therefore, beloved church, pray, pray for me, your pastor; pray that my eyes will look heavenward; pray that I do not despair; pray that I keep faith, patience and hope; pray, I plead, that I may boldly and freely make known to you the mystery of the gospel (Eph. 6:19).

12. And now, my beloved, one more request I make of you! I belong to those who cannot yet endure praise. I have far too much pride and self-love. If you, therefore, find anything good in me, give God the glory for it and do not praise me, most certainly not to my face. That would be a great wrong. At the same time, I will promise you, that I will not praise you. This is the contract that we want to make with each other: you do not praise me; I do not praise you; but let us both so much the more praise Him, to whom all praise is due, and with such praise let us now begin and say with the sacred singer in Psalm 115:1, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory, for the sake of Thy steadfast love and Thy faithfulness!" Yes to Thee, O God, Father, Son

and Holy Spirit, be praise, honor, exaltation and thanksgiving, adoration, worship and glory in all the long eternities! Therefore, let us silently pray and implore the Lord over and over again today, that He may make this day, in which we have made this covenant with one another, a veritable day of blessing and joy for all eternity. And Thou, O Lord, bestow on us Thy grace, O Lord, grant success! Amen.

§77 4. "The "false movement," as it was captioned by Elder Heinrich Huebert and referred to by the others in the above reports, made its appearance during the second half of Wuest's fourteen-year ministry. Consisting of extremists, these more fanatical than pious people interpreted Wuest's bold ideas and his naively joyous and energetic manner in a distorted way, and when he began to oppose them, at first in a friendly manner, then more earnestly and finally quite decisively, they called him a pharisee who had denied his own gospel. In the fall of 1858, at a conference in connection with a mission festival in Rosenfeld (in Wuest's parish), these "joyous brethren," with a certain Kappes, a former school teacher in the Mariupol colonies (on the "Plan"), at their head, left the church amidst singing and shouts of joy. Kappes was endowed with an excellent memory, was a gifted speaker, possessed a rich imagination and wit, and was a good singer. He became the ugliest caricature of Wuest and his worst rod of correction. He was finally destroyed by his own viciousness after Wuest's death (according to the handwritten jubilee history of the M.B. Church of 1885). Unfortunately, Kappes also deceived some of the better people for a longer or shorter period of time. One of these was Joseph Hottmann among the Wuerttembergers who died in 1900 in the Crimea as one "disappointed." We would also apply the same term to him and many others who ended their lives in a similar manner as the "Friends" or half-"Friends of Jerusalem." Morally, Hottmann was a thoroughly irreproachable character; he was also a great benefactor. Long before Hottmann appeared on the scene, Kappes' special friend Wilhelm Bartel from Gnadenfeld, then Berdiansk, who died on the "Plan," was in a similar position among the Mennonites for a considerable period of time. Even Johann Claassen of Liebenau, that noble and deeply pious man with a Zinzendorf-like love of the Savior, allowed himself to be strongly influenced by this movement of excessive exuberance for quite some time, even though never as much as Hottmann (according to the testimony of Pastor Dobbert in the document cited in XXV) nor as strongly as Wilhelm Bartel. Thus, as Elder Huebert narrates, a Mennonite wing of the "joyous brethren" was formed. It became Claassen's great and honorable duty to subdue this movement in the organized M.B. Church and to place the congregation, through the grace of God, onto the road to health and sanity, which it had fundamentally

always desired and on which it has, through the grace of God, been concerned to travel for the past fifty years. Claassen was saved from the same "disappointment" and retained his "connection[18] with the dear Savior" to the end. Even Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld in spite of his very different character, belonged to the movement of the "joyous," though never without some reservations, and even before Claassen he decisively opposed the movement.

§78 5. The disharmony, which also entered into the relationship between Wuest and the Mennonite brethren as a consequence, is most certainly stubbornly suppressed not only in all of their reminiscences intended for the public but also in their most private correspondence because of a feeling of shame and repentance. "Before the separation" and—"when the pastor and all the others were still together"—is all that one can find in the unusually numerous, detailed and intimate letters of Claassen and Reimer. Love and a touching respect are visible in all of the places where the "pastor," as Wuest was generally called, is mentioned, as can be seen from Reimer's "reports," whose house, "until the separation" in 1858, was the pastor-prophet's quarters.

§79 6. With this separation, or, at the very least, this alienation of a large number of brethren, among whom were many of his special favorites, such as Hottmann, Claassen, Reimer and Bartel, there came a time for Wuest in which he witnessed the burning of all that which he had built of wood and straw on Jesus Christ, the one foundation, aside from the gold and precious stones. Now he was "flailed with the very rods[19] he had planted," as he used to say according to a letter of his widow to the Rev. Abram Kroeker of 1900. But it is wrong to conclude, as the Privy Councillor Prinz (a child of Neu-Hoffnung and Advanced Secondary School teacher in Berdiansk) does at the end of his wonderfully written, lively and trustworthy description of the pastor that Wuest—in the last years of his life when he became sickly—took spiritual stock of his life, began to exercise self-criticism, adopted the position embodied in the "Temple" [20] (movement) of Christoph Hoffmann and Christoph Paulus. That would not have been criticism of his former activity; that would have been a fall from the faith which he had preached throughout his ministry in Wuerttemberg (three to four years) and in Russia (fourteen years). Even his widow protested against this assumption with counter-evidence. If Wuest did indeed listen to Kirschenhardthoff and Hoffmann during the last years of his life, one must remember that Hoffmann then still energetically wrote and spoke in an "orthodox" fashion, orthodox in the good evangelical sense of the term. Even the elder brethren, who had long since left the Church, Huebert, Claassen, Reimer and others, still listened to Hoffmann

for a long time, until well into the 1870s, when Hoffmann, through his "circular" ("Sendschreiben"), which he sent out as the official doctrinal statement in his capacity as the "Head of the Temple Congregation" with wide-ranging episcopal powers, began solemnly to depart from the foundation of a positive Christian confession, which all Bible-believing evangelical Christians, and with them the newly organized M.B. Church, have always adhered to, and openly began to move in the direction of what has been called the "new and higher criticism" or neology. At this point the last ties between Hoffmann and the brethren were severed.[21]

§80 7. a) Wuest died believing in his "Christ the crucified" on July 13, 1859, in the forty-second year of his life. Even though the extremists among the "Joyous" would deny him salvation, as Pastor Dobbert writes, this was not the case among those who were soon to establish the "Brethren Church" (M.B. Church). "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness," Isaiah 57:1-2. That is how they assessed his death in the latter circle.[22] For the formal separation from the church, that is, the establishment of a new church, was already underway, and one could not imagine how the "pastor," who was, after all, a pastor, should choose between August Lenzmann, Nickolas Schmidt (then still belonging to the "Church"), Leonhard Sudermann and his comrades, the "rational" or "ecclesiastical" group on the one hand, and Johann Claassen, Jakob Reimer, Wilhelm Bartel, etc., the "simple ones," "children of grace" (as they liked to call themselves) or "Joyous," on the other hand. No matter how independent the criticism of Wuest or the actions of the brethren, the reverential love for Wuest within our brotherhood circle did not die out. "God did not lead the pastor any further (in regard to congregational order, etc.) and has now called this faithful servant to his rest." Wuest, the spotless, highly gifted, lovable father of the faith, was not forgotten, and we name him, along with Menno Simons, among the first of "the congregation of the first-born of the spirits of the perfected righteous, whose name is inscribed in heaven, as one of our teachers who has told us the Word of God," and we worshipfully thank Him who gave him to us and who will always remain, in the first and last instance, our only great "teacher," Jesus, the mediator of the New Testament. In His grace, He gave us Menno and Wuest, Spener and Tersteegen, Zinzendorf and Spurgeon, among many other greater or lesser characters of church history as teachers of righteousness (Daniel 12:3; Hebrews 12:23, 13:7).

b) The widow of Pastor Wuest, who died in Wuerttemberg in 1902, writes to the Rev. A. Kroeker regarding her husband's

last days and death: "You seem to read out of Prinz's book [*Die Kolonien der Bruedergemeinde* by Jakob Prinz (The Colonies of the Brotherhood Church)] that my husband finally began to vacillate in his faith. It is not so, however, even though he may have confessed to having one-sidedly preached free grace while neglecting the other part of Scripture, and then suffered chastening by the rod which he himself had planted. He wanted so much to correct his mistake, but he was unable to do so because death surprised him! Certainly, the feelings, which allowed him to taste the misfortune which stormed in upon him from all sides [during this period his enemies had once again set the authorities at his throat because of 'propaganda'; no less painful was the separation from the 'Joyous'], had to become overpowering and had to shake him to the very depths of his being! In his last suffering-filled days he was quiet and spoke little; once he gave me a very friendly look and said: 'Oh, I feel so well, indeed I feel a heavenly well-being!' At that point he must have overcome all of his difficult battles, and God now, finally, in His grace, gave him, for all the bitter things he had experienced, sweet and heavenly blessings, which no longer forsook him! One or two days before his death I began, quite frankly with an anxious heart, to sing a verse from Hiller's 'Schatzkaestlein' at his bedside, because he loved singing so well:

'One may place his trust in grace,' but I had hardly begun to sing when he quickly joined in quite strongly:

"One trusts it without remorse,
And should dark fear o'ercome us,
The words—God is true—remain!"

"And should the grief grow greater,
Still we believe and call aloud:
Oh, thou mighty Savior,
You come, then come indeed!"

"I knew nothing of many of the things that depressed him; he naturally kept many things from me in order not to make my heart heavier than it already was, since I clearly foresaw his death! And once, after he had lain there quietly for some time, he called out in a loud voice: 'Jesus! Jesus! nothing but Jesus!' That certainly testifies to the fact that he must have quietly been very preoccupied with his dear Savior and quite satisfied with His leading. Some brethren were also present at his death, among them Leonhard Sudermann and his wife, who stood by me. . . ."

c) "Wuest's funeral took place the following Sunday. A great number of Swabians, Prussians [from the Mariupol 'Plan'], and Mennonites had come, some from great distances. This participation

even at his grave testified to the great love they bore Wuest, who had been a spiritual father and leader to them and had awakened in them a joy of life the like of which they had not dreamed of previously.

"In the center of the well-kept Neu-Hoffnung cemetery, amidst the rustling leaves of the friendly village woods, there rises a tombstone, which covers his ashes and is surrounded with flowers provided by the loving hands of his congregation to this very day, decorated with a surrounding border and a bronze monument, which to this day preaches Wuest's most beloved verses with regard to salvation in Christ, printed in gold letters, to later generations. Thus even his grave portrays him as the center, as the heart and soul of the spiritual life of the [Separatist Wuerttemberg] Brotherhood Church." (Point c. according to Prinz and Kroeker.)

§81 8. As distinctly as the M.B. Church of today may differentiate itself outwardly in its mode of baptism and church order from Wuest's manner, the idea of a primitive apostolic order was nevertheless intertwined in Wuest's total teachings, as was the case with the older and more recent Pietists: Philipp Matthaeus Hahn, Tersteegen, Friedrich W. Krummacher (who came very close to becoming a Baptist), etc. According to the testimonies of Mennonite and Wuerttemberg contemporaries, Wuest clearly enunciated the opinion that neither his nor the Mennonite Church's way could be equated with that of the apostles. Compare the tenth paragraph of his inaugural sermon: "partition," "wholly," ". . . believe and be baptized . . .," "chasm." Like many another in his position, he did not feel called to build something new or to bring about a restitution.

XIII.
ALLIANCE AND COMMUNION FELLOWSHIP PRIOR TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE M.B. CHURCH

§82 1. Thus, according to J. Reimer of Gnadenfeld and others, Mennonites, Separatist Wuerttembergers and Lutherans had come and remained together in a broad alliance under Wuest's leadership for a long time. Common communion services had even been held, at least in Wuest's church, and probably also in the Gnadenfeld Church under Friedrich Lange. This was the story that circulated among the older brethren. The nestor of the Molotschna school teachers and the author's beloved fatherly friend, Brother Peter Siemens (who died toward the end of 1905), still asserted this to the author as late as the summer of 1903. In the *Missionary Bulletin of the Church of Baptized Christians*

of 1869, page 154, in an essay, essentially dictated by Elder Huebert (whose memory in regard to formal matters was then already very uncertain), written by the author in his very early years, it says: "Most of them [the brethren] took communion in the Gnadenfeld Church, whose elder then held open communion: Lutherans, Separatists and Mennonites." Later this was changed under Elder Lenzmann. We do not, however, possess any certain written documentary evidence to this effect.[23] Any correction would be welcomed. The tradition concerning an open communion in Gnadenfeld was so universal that the author was startled at the absence of any sure documentary evidence. The Gnadenfeld *Chronicle* passes over the Wuest epoch very quickly and with a certain coolness, determined, no doubt, by the character of the *Chronicle's* author.

§82(2) 2. The first private communion service of the Mennonite Brethren and its consequences. a) On or about St. Martin's Day in the fall of 1859, according to J. Reimer, H. Huebert and others, the Mennonite brethren celebrated their first private communion service. Elder Lenzmann, in the letter of March 16, 1863, cited above, relates: ". . . After I had rejected the request of a few of my church members, 'to extend to them, and those whom they would designate as believers, the holy communion separately and as often as they should desire it,' as an inadmissible innovation which had, to my knowledge, never taken place in a Mennonite congregation, and which would only further spiritual pride and destroy the unity of the congregation, they, together with a few members of other [Mennonite] congregations, began to celebrate the holy communion among themselves in private, contending that, according to the Holy Scriptures and their own consciences, they could no longer participate in it with the unbelievers in the congregation. . . ." The Gnadenfeld *Chronicle* relates that the brethren had wanted communion to be celebrated every Sunday.[24] The brethren probably hoped, by this means, eventually to be able to celebrate holy communion amongst the believers with the least trouble, since the members of the congregation who thought differently only attended communion services at certain specific, widely separated times. The fact that they approached Lenzmann with this request is proof, firstly, that, in spite of his emerging coolness toward them (cf. *#51* and *52*: "Brotherhood" and "Brotherhood School") they regarded him as a bishop and brother in Christ, and, secondly, that they did not readily leave the established congregations.

b) Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld relates the following: "As our fellowship established itself more firmly on the Word of God, there arose in us the desire to celebrate the Lord's Supper more often, and we asked our Elder Lenzmann to break bread more often, even if this had to be done

here and there in the homes, as they did in the Acts of the Apostles 2:46-47. But that was not allowed us. Thus it happened in the fall of 1859, two weeks after St. Martin's, as a few brothers and sisters were gathered together in Elizabethal in the home of K. W. [Cornelius Wiens], that they broke bread[25] together in all simplicity and childlikeness, observing the teaching of Paul in I Cor. 11:23. As soon as this became known a great commotion arose in the churches, and the elders were accused of not excommunicating the [participating] members of their congregations soon enough. In the other congregations they were simply placed in the ban [a little while later this was combined with a complete civil ostracism, which ruined many economically]. The Gnadenfeld congregation proceeded in a somewhat [much!] more mild manner. . . . Six brothers and sisters, some of whom were young [who had participated in Elizabethtal], were called before the ministers and forced to give an account of their actions. They were admonished and promised to submit themselves to everything that was not against God's Word and their conscience." Thus far Reimer. On the nineteenth and twenty-seventh of December, brotherhood meetings took place in Gnadenfeld where the ministers and the brethren in agreement with Claassen and Reimer, both of whom had not been present at that communion service, pronounced themselves satisfied with the promises made by the six members. Others, however, were not satisfied with this and loosed "a barrage [Reimer's words] against Claassen and me, screaming: 'Out with them, they are no better than the rest' [the six]. The screamers threatened to 'turn Reimer over to the Area Administrative Office together with all those who agreed with this shameful act.' Reimer quietly made his way forward to the elder and asked him to allow them to leave, for he was not willing to allow himself to become involved with the church brethren, and especially Heinrich Franz, in this way. Reimer's and Claassen's opponents shouted to Lenzmann: 'Why do you not allow them to leave?' until he said in a sorrowful tone: 'Well, then, brothers, leave!' But when it appeared as though only Claassen and I would go out, Franz called out to Br. Claassen: 'As a rule you are such an honest [?] man, so call on your cohorts to come with you!' Thereupon Claassen turned around and said: 'Well, brothers!'—whoever shared his views should follow him. About ten brothers left the church." (According to Reimer.)

c) Although the Gnadenfeld congregation lost only about twenty-five members as a result of this "departure," it nevertheless also led to the separation of those who gathered themselves around them as guests and little by little joined them more formally, as Claassen, Nicholas Schmidt, Abram Matthies and others had done at an earlier date. Gnadenfeld had ceased to be the center of the Brotherhood Movement. Three years later a considerably larger number of those, at this moment

(1859/60) still regarded as belonging to the Mennonite Church but later called the "Friends of Jerusalem" (to which group even the worthy Minister Nikolai Schmidt joined himself), left Gnadenfeld, as they had earlier left the Brotherhood Movement, and established the "Temple Church" under the direction of Hoffmann and amidst circumstances that shook and weakened the Gnadenfeld congregation much more than the incident related above.

XIV.
THE FOUNDING OF THE INDEPENDENT M.B. CHURCH OF 1860

§83 1. As a result of the "Secession or Founding Document" of January 6, 1860, which Claassen and a few Gnadenfeld members, together with members of other congregations, had signed,—eighteen heads of families in all,—and to which Reimer and eight other Gnadenfeld members (men) agreed on January 18, the essential establishment of an independent M.B. Church had taken place.[26] Attempts, on the part of Lenzmann and the other Gnadenfeld ministers, toward reunion were, according to Reimer's account, made in a very friendly manner; though in vain. The secessionists were supposed to revoke the Document of Secession and denounce their communion service. And every time they were on the point of an agreement with Lenzmann and the ministers, the agreement was torpedoed by other important members of the congregation "who knew nothing about a new life from God," (Reimer) and the rift was made worse than before. The "Secession or Founding Document" reads as follows:

"To the total body of church elders of our Molotschna Mennonite Church![27]

a) "We, the undersigned, have, by the grace of God, recognized the decadent condition of the Mennonite brotherhood and can, for God's and conscience's sake, no longer continue therein; for we fear the inevitable judgment of God, since the openly godless living and wickedness cry to God in heaven. We also fear the loss of the rights and privileges granted us by our benevolent government because the transgressions and disobedience against it increase continually. It is tragic to behold (O Jesus, have mercy, and open the eyes of the spiritually blind!), when in the market places before the very eyes of their neighbors, our Mennonite brethren live satanic lives; and even the ministers go about and see it, yea even at the celebrations, sit quietly by, see and hear how people serve the devil! Of such persons the Scripture says (Ps. 109:17-18): He clothed himself with cursing, like as with his garment; as he loved cursing, so let it come unto him. The teachers do not stand in the gap as of old, Hosea 13:5.

b) "Therefore, we herewith completely dissociate ourselves from these decadent churches, though we pray for our brethren, that they shall be saved. We want to be innocent of the souls of the erring. But Thou, O Jesus, equip faithful living witnesses, who will direct Thy children and the work of Thy hands to Thee! Amen.

c) "We speak here of the entire Mennonite brotherhood, because the supreme government authorities consider it one true brotherhood.

d) "In the articles,[28] we are in agreement with our dear Menno, according to our convictions from the Holy Scripture.

e) "We confess a baptism on faith, as a seal of faith;[29] not on a memorized faith, as is the practice, but on a genuine, loving faith effected by the Spirit of God. For without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). And he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of His (Romans 8:9). And again our dear Saviour says to Nicodemus, John 3:3: Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Baptism is not the new birth, as some of the unconverted maintain, but serves as a sign for the baptismal condidate, that he is really born again.

f) "Regarding holy communion we confess that it serves to strengthen the faith of true believers, for they are reminded of their mighty salvation through the death of the Lord Jesus. Yes, it is a sign that they stand in very intimate union with Jesus, their Savior. I Cor. 10:16. Furthermore, it serves as a sign of the covenant and fellowship of believers (v.17), and not as a sign of the fellowship of believers and unbelievers with one another, as it is presently practiced. This is likewise stated in Menno Simons' *Foundation of Christian Doctrine,* Vol. I, pp. 115-121. Page 121 reads: 'If someone errs in doctrine and faith, and walks in the flesh, he can in no case be permitted to fellowship with the godfearing and repentant. . . .' In I Cor. 5:11 the Apostle Paul states: If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one we are not even to eat. How much less partake of holy communion with him? Unfortunately, there are many covetous, drunkards and blasphemers with whom one shares the Lord's Supper, for not only those are drunkards who are almost continually under the influence of liquor, but also those who occasionally gorge themselves with food and drink at markets and taverns. I Cor. 10:20-21 says 'that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils.' Likewise also, those who walk in the flesh cannot glorify God in the communion, because they do not know Him, but as usual they serve the devil herewith, for no man can serve two masters. Matthew 6:24. Now the apostle did not want the believers to have fellowship with the devil and the idolater who serves the devil, and thus become one body, I Cor. 10:17. In Revelation 18:4 the Savior says, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of

her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' II Corinthians 6 states that believers shall have no fellowship with unbelievers, but shall come out from among them, and be separate.

g) "Regarding footwashing, we confess that the Lord Jesus instituted it, John 13, to be practiced among one another, for the blessing is in the deed, not in knowledge.

h) "Ministers may be called in two Scriptural ways: Some are chosen by God alone, without human assistance, and sent out by His Spirit, as were the prophets and apostles, and also the house of Stephen was self-appointed to the ministry of the saints. I Cor. 26:15. Such are also mentioned by Paul in I Tim. 3. Others are called through the instrumentality of true believers, as recorded in Acts 1. Menno recognized this, as he proves in his *Foundation*, Vol. I, p. 148.

i) "Regarding the ban, we confess that all carnal and reprobate sinners must be banned from the fellowship of believers, as Paul states in II. Thess. 3:14-15. In the event that someone falls into a carnal sin (God save us from it), and the Spirit of Christ, who alone can work true repentance, convicts him of his sin, so that he confesses and repents; in that case, the church has no authority to ban such a repentant sinner,[30] because the forgiveness of sin is not obtained in or through the ban, but by the merit of Jesus Christ. This was also Menno's conviction, as recorded in Vol. III, pp. 334 and 335. However, an unrepentant sinner may not be accepted into the fellowship of believers until he be genuinely converted to Christ.

k) "In all other articles of our confession, we are in full agreement with Menno Simons.

Elizabethtal, January 6, 1860

"Abraham Cornelssen, Cornelius Wiens, Isaak Koop, Franz Klassen, Abram Wiens, Martin Klassen, Abram Wiens, Daniel Hoppe, August Strauss, Jacob Becker, Isaak Regehr, Andreas Voth, Jakob Wall, Johann Claassen, Heinrich Huebert, Peter Stobbe, Abram Peters, Diedrich Claassen.

1) "This shall serve to inform the elders, in case they desire to turn to our fellowship with regard to this matter, that they address themselves to the following designated members: Abraham Cornelssen, Isaak Koop and Johann Claassen."

2. That the brethren remained "Mennonites" appears to be more than amply documented.

XV.
THE STRUGGLE OF THE M.B. CHURCH TO ATTAIN THE RIGHTS AND STATUS OF A LEGAL AND INDEPENDENT MENNONITE CHURCH

§84 1. The response of the church elders to the document of the brethren of January 6 reads as follows:

"To the honorable Area Administrative Office.

On January 6, we, the undersigned church elders received a document from the following persons (the eighteen names follow), in which the signers completely dissociate themselves from the decadent church, as they express themselves, and, as can be seen from their document, desire to create their own church. On January 18, at a general conference of all elders, it was decided that this could not be allowed, and because these members have completely dissociated themselves from us, we are turning them over to the honorable Area Administrative Office with the request that you may do your part to dissuade them from embarking upon their erroneous intentions.

Alexanderwohl, January 18, 1860. The church elders: Toews, Ratzlaff, Wedel, Warkentin, Lenzmann."

§84(2) 2. On December 20, 1862, Jakob Martens of Tiegenhagen, minister of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt congregation, sent a statement to the publisher of the *Mennonitische Blaetter* (the Minister Mannhardt of Danzig, Prussia), accompanying the most important documents in this matter, to the effect that, as a consequence of the document of the eighteen brethren of January 6, a general church and area administrative elders'[31] conference had taken place, at which the Ohrloff-Halbstadt Church Council is supposed to have insisted that the general decadence be opposed on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, but in vain, in spite of the fact that the reality of this decadence could not be denied. Instead of uniting behind such an attempt, they were handed the above paper by the five elders. Pastor Dobbert of Prischib, in the document already cited (cf. *#170*), calls the statement of the five elders a *testimonium pauperitas*, a certificate of impoverishment. It is noteworthy that Lenzmann now fully consented to all of this! It was now said among the Brethren that the Minister Heinrich Franz was, from now on, the driving force in Gnadenfeld as well as the author of most of Lenzmann's papers. Reimer describes Lenzmann's personal attitude as a friendly one for quite some time; in the council of elders, however, he gradually took over the leading role in this matter. From now on Ohrloff became the protectress of the Brethren until they had won a total victory.

§85 3. The following document, "Declaration to the honorable Area Administrative Office," makes the purpose of the Brethren completely clear.

"In accordance with the summons of the honorable Area Administrative Office to make known what our essential purpose is, we declare, in the name of all our brethren, who signed the document of January 6, and, amidst prayer, called upon us to represent them, that each one of us would much sooner have remained in his own congregation; but because the ministers, as we declared in the document of January 6, do not act in accordance with the Word of God, we cannot do so for the sake of our conscience, and wish to form our own church *as Mennonites*. For the rest, we commend ourselves into the hands of our dear Savior, who has loved us and washed away our sins with His blood. Written at Halbstadt, January 23, 1860. Abraham Cornelssen, Johann Claassen, Isaak Koop."

§86 4. On January 27, the Area Administrative Office, on the basis of the penal law against secret (!) gatherings, forbade all religious gatherings in the colonies! (Compare below *#159:* "Petition to His Majesty.")

§87 5. We can discern the attitude of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt congregation to the cause of the Brethren from the following documents. Because of earlier ecclesio-political blunders[32] (*##50, 58,*k,1) and their now aged Bishop Bernhard Fast, they had also been forced to taste numerous "rods they had themselves planted."

a) "From the diary" [of an Ohrloff minister, given to the current Elder David Schellenberg of Rueckenau by the late Ohrloff Church Minister Franz Isaak and copied in his own hand. Compare further with the letter of July, 1862]. "I pondered the condition of the Mennonite brethren [he means all Mennonites here]; and behold, it is even worse than the departed brethren describe it. There is no fear of God, no faithfulness or honesty in the land, everyone must beware of his fellow man, his own brother, and those who still repent of anything repent the fact that they cannot cheat their fellow man any worse than they already do. And those who boast, boast of their roguery and revelry, as a hero of drunkenness, as a ruffian and the like. The keepers of Zion see it and remain silent. Or should they not be able to see? Are all the keepers blind? And are they what the prophet describes further on? Do they hate discipline and order? Then it says: 'Why do you take my covenant in your mouth?' The most chilling threats of God's Word then apply to them, and it may have occurred to those who left: 'Let them go their way, for they are blind leaders!' At their feasts they talk first of temporal matters, then, for the

sake of form, of God and Jesus, and then again of useless things; and when the wolf comes and the devil's music and the devil's drink[33] begin, they knock out their pipes and quickly leave the place as though they were holier than Jesus, who followed after the wretched people in order to save souls from destruction. Behold, if the sheep cannot find any pasture they will scatter, for they do not recognize the stranger or the hireling. To pick up the mangy sheep, wherever they may come from, and incorporate them into the fold,[34] is not the equivalent of being a shepherd; but to abuse and set the dogs on those who search out better pasture and who, in spite of this good intention, miss the road somewhat and err in other matters, is not the equivalent of fulfilling a shepherd's duty either. Therefore I am eager to know what they will do with those who will not heed the stranger's voice, stray from the flock in search of the good shepherd, who promises them green pastures and eternal life. I pray God that He will not allow us to sink so low that we should draw the sword of wrath in anger against those who have left us over the truths they have pointed us to, in order to apply pressure to their consciences or to give them the opportunity to skip and hop to their erroneous conceptions because of persecution and suffering! Such discipline could be wholesome for them, but we would nevertheless not want to serve as a rod for the salvation of others, whom the disciplining Father, after having achieved His purpose, throws into the fire. One could let them be, enter into a brotherly relation with them and say: Yes, dear people, you are quite right, we are what you say we are, and even worse, but we also intend to enter upon a better path. No one shall hide himself in his own opinion or point of view, the Word of God shall apply to all; you accept advice and instruction from us and we will do the same from you! Enquire of your conscience and the Word of God: if you can, remain a little while longer and do not run away, do not abandon us now, we need those who have insight into corruption and who can pray. Could not an illumination take place in the church through them? It would indeed be to play into the hands of the devil were we to oppose these souls and tolerate and strengthen the godless! No one should plead their errors, they are certainly to be rejected. How many errors did Jesus constantly have to suffer and correct in His disciples,—did He reject them because of this? Not at all! The people, whose faith first produced doubt in our Menno Simons, then led him to study and finally brought him to the knowledge and the blissful enjoyment of truth, also erred in certain things; but he accepted them with love and wisdom from above, and he won over many souls. Together with him, these are now praising the longed-for Lamb in heaven. O Lord Jesus! Give Yourself, Your angels, and Your elect the joy of seeing that your lambs, even when they err, are not sacrificed, persecuted, or become a prey of the wolf, but are sought out, cared for

and become a possession acquired by Your blood and made free through Your truth for time and eternity; and that none of us allow ourselves to be used as hirelings, ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing, or as a hunting dog by Satan, but that all of us together may be filled with the Spirit of Your love and united with one another in faith and become Your blessed possession! Amen."

b) The Minister Johann Harder of Blumenstein, who had still been ordained by Bernhard Fast as elder of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt congregation in 1860, in a very friendly letter of February 11, fully acknowledged the decay of the Mennonite Church but also gave warning in an earnest and friendly manner. Writing to Br. Heinrich Huebert, who had also left the church but had, till then, been a very active member of the Ohrloff congregation, he heartily requested their cooperation: ". . . But that you wish to leave us causes us grief, for the church whose condition is in fact as you describe it in your letter, needs members who recognize the decadence, seek to improve matters and pray. . . ."

§88 6. Momentary Lack of Courage and a Wrong Move on the Part of the Three Secessionist Delegates.

"We, the undersigned Mennonites of the Elizabethtal Colony—Abraham Cornelssen, Isaak Koop, and Johann Claassen of Liebenau—this February 10, 1860, give our word[35] [literally, signature] to the Lord Inspector of the colonies, that we will not secede from the Mennonite Church [!!], not perform any ecclesiastical ceremony, indeed not take any religious action which is forbidden by our church elders—without having first received the express permission of the higher authorities. Johann Claassen, Abraham Cornelssen, Isaak Koop."

§89 7. Further Actions by the Five Church Elders

"To the Molotschna Mennonite Area Administrative Office. From all the church elders of the Molotschna Mennonite District [of 'all' the elders (7), two were not included: the elders from Ohrloff-Halbstadt and the *Kleine Gemeinde*].

Explanatory Statement

"In response to the letter of the honorable Area Administrative Office of the 5th day of this month, regarding the invitation of the Lord Inspector of the Colonies of the 1st day of this month, No. 293, requesting an explanation from us in connection with the members who have seceded from our Mennonite brotherhood, we declare the following to be true:

1) "The position of these erring members consists essentially in the following: a. that they approach, explain and apply the Holy Scriptures

in a one-sided way, and declare that their interpretation and application of certain passages of Scripture is the only correct one—which is why they are not open to any kind of correction or instruction; b. that they do not respect any existing church order or organization, which they take to be mere human statutes and say, in this regard, that one must obey God rather than man. According to their point of view they did precisely this when they celebrated holy communion privately in their homes. And finally—c. that they regard only themselves to be true Christians and, in their outrageous presumption and delusion, declare the entire Mennonite brotherhood to be so decadent as to have totally become the slave of the devil.

2) "Already from this major direction in which these people are moving, and the way in which they have renounced our fellowship, it is becoming apparent that one cannot contemplate or expect a peaceful coexistence with them. Rather, should they establish themselves in our midst as a new and independent religious fellowship, it would only create a scandal and disorder, all the more so since, on the basis of our experiences with them, there is no reason to believe that they will call a halt at their present position. It is much more to be expected, since they are thrown entirely upon their own resources, that they will make even further strides toward fanaticism than they already have. Since we are naturally forced to view these people and their descendants, because of their secession from the Mennonite brotherhood, as those who have seceded from us, the future could only hold the most lamentable disorders in store for those families of our church whose children might intermarry with theirs. It is also to be feared, because of their earnest efforts on behalf of their own opinions, that many other innocent and well-meaning people will be drawn into their fanaticism since they carry on their activity behind a cloak of truly Christian sentiments.

3) "It goes without saying that we cannot give our consent to the establishment and existence of a new and independent religious fellowship in the midst of our Mennonite brotherhood. We have attempted to influence the erring members with earnestness and love and with every means available to us from an ecclesiastical point of view, in order to dissuade them from the errors of their way. Not only did they not heed this but, in order to withdraw completely from the purview of our church discipline, on January 6 of this year they dissociated themselves from our Mennonite brotherhood in writing. As a consequence, we have denounced them, under the date of January 18 of this year, to the Area Administrative Office as no longer belonging to our Mennonite brotherhood and consider ourselves entitled to make recommendations to the secular authorities with regard to their further treatment or punishment. We only allow ourselves this one request, that,

as much as the law allows, moderatre measures be employed to bring these erring ones to a knowledge of their guilt before ultimate steps are taken. Halbstadt, March 11, 1860. The church elders:
Ratzlaff, Warkentin, Wedel, Lenzmann, Toews."

§90 8. The last ecclesio-political act of the aged Bishop Bernhard Fast known[36] to us is a document very favorable to the Brethren and reads as follows:

"To the Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt!

I cannot sign the explanatory statement which five of the church elders have drawn up, with regard to the brethren who have dissociated themselves from our decadent church [thus, literally, did the senior member of the Molotschna Council of Elders write in an official document; cf. *Mennonitische Blaetter,* No. 1, 1863], for the following reason: because the cause of these brethren [!] has remained quite unknown to me till now, I find it necessary to acquire a greater understanding of and more conviction concerning it; and only then, in accordance with my duty and my findings, will I, as soon as possible, make my statement. In any case, however, because this is a matter of some importance and the Lord Inspector of the colonies has required such a declaration from all congregations and church elders, I consider it essential that such a statement be requested from the honorable Elder Friesen [of the *Kleine Gemeinde*]. Tiege, March 15, 1860.
Bernhard Fast, elder."

§91 9. Elder Friesen of the *Kleine Gemeinde,* who otherwise very seldom participated in the joint actions of the church or elders' council, writes to the Area Administrative Office—the only document that we possess from this congregation in the matter concerning the M.B. Church. Even though written fearfully and with reticence, it nevertheless is explicit in rejecting all political measures while advocating only Mennonite-ecclesiastical ones: ". . . We do not know how to declare and advise anything except what the Apostle Paul teaches in II Thess. 3:14; . . . therefore we beg that you not take it amiss if we desire, as much as possible, to refrain from becoming involved in this matter. Neukirch, March 24, 1860. Johann Friesen, elder."

§92 10. Ohrloff's further Defence of the Brethren and its New Statement.

a) Johann Harder, meanwhile ordained to the position of elder by the aged and sickly honorable Bernhard Fast, writes:

"To the Molotschna Mennonite Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt:

"Because we were unable to present a declaration at the conference held on the 11th of this month with regard to the religious fellowship which has arisen in the colonies, due to our ignorance in this matter, we invited some of the members of this fellowship in order to receive from them a more particular written explanation of their intentions, which we could use as answer or statement to the issues posed by the Area Administrative Office in its letter of the 5th of this month, No. 1783. During this conversaton we declared to them that a celebration of holy communion, as some of their members have celebrated it, even presupposing all of them to be true Christians, could not be permitted at all because, were such freedom to be extended them, even the most depraved and vicious sect could demand the same, thereby necessarily creating the greatest disorders.[37] For even if it is not written that only the elder can extend the bread and the wine to the congregation, it is nevertheless written: 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake' (I Peter 2:13), and in this instance it means that only the elder can extend the elements. They allowed themselves to be corrected in this regard and, in the future, will no longer celebrate it in this manner, as they have already promised the Lord Inspector on the 10th of February of this year.[38] As far as their dissociation from the decadent church is concerned, we have urgently requested and earnestly advised that they should return to the same, to which they have responded with a written statement: [cf. b. below].

"Since all of us will surely be eager to oppose the decay of true Christianity on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, it should be possible, in consequence of this fellowship's own statement signed by thirty-three of its members, to conclude this matter in a different way. Blumenstein, March 25, 1860. Johann Harder, elder."

b) Statement of the Brethren. §93

"To the Church Council of Ohrloff and Halbstadt:

In conformity with the request, we here declare that, as we stated in our letter of January 23 of this year to the honorable Area Administrative Office, each of us would have preferred to have remained in his own congregation. But because the ministers do not act in accordance with God's Word, as we also said in our letter of January 23 of this year, and are prepared to prove, we found ourselves forced to secede from the church for the sake of our consciences and desire to establish our own church on the basis of the Mennonite confession of faith, as all other Mennonite congregations have.

"In response to the statement of the five elders of March 11 of this year we answer:

1) "a. That the elders would not be able to prove to us that we interpret the Holy Scriptures in a one-sided manner and take certain passages out of context—and proofs from the Word of God that we do in fact err, have not been provided to us by them as we requested. b. That we do in fact recognize a church organization in accordance with the Word of God can be clearly seen from our letter of January 6; but the reason why we celebrated communion was that we did not find it sinful, in God's Word, to do so and could not celebrate it for conscience sake in the company of unbelievers—drunkards for example. c. In regard to c) we are forced to declare that it is untrue that we consider ourselves the only true Christians, and are ready to concede at any time that there can be other true Christians known only to the Lord. That sentence, too, is exaggerated which states that we declare the entire Mennonite brotherhood to be enslaved by the devil; but the Lord forbid that we should call evil, good and good, evil.

2) "We have no other major position nor do we seek to establish a new religious society, but intend to live as Mennonites according to the confession of our fathers in peaceful co-existence with others, which is why no disorder need be feared. Nor do we seek to spread our opinions, but it shall always be and remain our joy to lead disconsolate souls to Christ.

3) "We have, as we have stated, no intention whatever to establish a new religious society; nor were we admonished with love and earnestness on the part of ministers from the Word of God, but were much more threatened from the very beginning and dealt with on a judicial level. We have not dissociated ourselves from the Mennonite brotherhood in our letter of January 6, but only from the decadent churches.

"If the ministers would attempt to stem the tide of corruption within the churches with all sincerity and in accordance with the Word of God, we would be happy, even today, to set foot in them [in the document by Johann Harder of March 24 one reads: '. . . join the same . . .'], assist them and, with God's gracious help, plant and help to build the congregations. Given in Ohrloff this March 19, 1860.

"Ladekopp—David Claassen, Abraham Peters, Peter Stobbe. Liebenau—Heinrich Huebert, Simon Harms, Johann Claassen. Waldheim—Gottlieb Strauss, Johann Strauss, Friedrich Strauss, Johann Strauss, David Doerksen. Gnadenfeld—Jakob Reimer, Heinrich Bartel, Bernhard Penner. Rudnerweide—Jakob Becker,[39] Benjamin Becker, Abraham Regehr. Pastva—Jakob Wall, Isaak Regehr, Andreas Voth. Berdiansk—Wilhelm Bartel. Mariental—Diedrich Claassen. Elizabethtal—Isaak Koop, Abraham Cornelssen, Franz Klassen, Abraham Wiens, Cornelius Wiens. Schardau—August Strauss, Daniel Hoppe, Heinrich Flaming, Lichtfelde—Martin Klassen, Jakob Kroecker, Abraham Wiens."[40]

c) Elder Johann Harder's Second Statement.

"To the Molotschna Mennonite Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt! As a supplement to our letter of March 25, we declare the following, from the same position and point of view we established in the above letter, concerning the Mennonites who have left our congregation: 1) The aspiration of these people finds expression in the desire to establish their own church on the foundation and confession of all other Mennonite churches, and in keeping with our highly esteemed religious freedom, live according to their faith in the midst of the other churches in the hope that thus they will be able to establish a better church discipline. If they will pursue this goal, then 2), the consequences need not be detrimental to the whole, and the single deviation in the fact that they observed holy communion should be forgiven them. Everyone who has learned to appreciate the mercy of God and the benevolent toleration that we enjoy in this land will be prepared to do this wholeheartedly. 3) The means to be used to dissuade these people from their intention to establish a church of their own, is, that we all begin in real earnest to act according to the Word of God, that the level of our church discipline be raised, and the church be positively changed, for which God in His grace grant us the power to will and to do! And if anyone should show himself worthy of punishment, the church of Christ serves him as standard and rule of conduct, as the Gospel of Christ teaches: to separate him from the congregation and have nothing to do with him until he becomes red with shame. This method always stands the test if it is used in such a way that the Lord can acknowledge and add His blessing to it. Should the conduct of a member of the congregation challenge the arm of the law, however, we will remain silent; for it does not bear the sword in vain, but is established to judge the wicked and praise the good. Blumenstein, March 29, 1860.

Johann Harder, elder."

11. Johann Claassen's first Journey to St. Petersburg in Behalf of the M.B. Church. §94

Since the threat of the local authorities constantly became more alarming, Johann Claassen, with the agreement of only his wife, his brother-in-law, Cornelius Reimer, and Br. Heinrich Huebert, suddenly left for St. Petersburg in the night of March 27, riding as far as Kharkov. By May 23, according to letters written in his own hand and a special accounting regarding the expenses of the journey, he had again returned. This was his first journey to St. Petersburg on behalf of the M.B. Church. He had already been there in 1854 and 1857 on behalf of the "Brotherhood School" in Gnadenfeld (*#52*). On April 19, 1866, Claassen in historical retrospect, writes to the Kuban congregation from Tiflis

regarding the trip: ". . . I had accomplished little enough in St. Petersburg; I saw only that our cause was everywhere a difficult one and that I wanted to commend it to the Lord. When I had returned from St. Petersburg, I advised the brothers and sisters to choose ministers; only they should not elect us: Cornelssen, Koop and myself, because we had signed the document [of February 10]. . . ."

XVI.
THE FIRST ELECTION OF MINISTERS BY THE M.B. CHURCH

§95 1. With the election of ministers the final organization (though not the final "putting in order!") of the M.B. Church had taken place. This happened on May 30, 1860. The original election list in the hand of Heinrich Huebert and Johann Claassen is extant in the archives of the M.B. Church in Russia. (Cf. further *#157*: "Election List," etc.)

2. The election took place in Jakob Reimer's home in Gnadenfeld. On June 2, Heinrich Huebert, in the name of the church, informed all the elders of the election in writing, appending the election list to his letter. At the same time all of the elders were invited for June 5 to the home of Jakob Reimer where "we want to raise our hearts and hands to invoke the blessing of our God and Lord and our eternal Rock, who has come to save sinners, upon our ministers." (According to Pastor Dobbert and Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld.) In spite of the fact that no elder, not even the one from Ohrloff, followed this invitation,[41] the confirmation of the first spiritual leader of the M.B. Church had nevertheless in principle taken place publicly before the whole Mennonite brotherhood through this act. Exactly how the "confirmation" of the first ministers took place, is not known to us with any certainty. We have been told that the old Brother Franz Klassen of Elizabethtal, probably the oldest member of the fellowship, who was soon afterwards confirmed as deacon, laid hands upon the candidates on behalf of the congregation amidst his prayers and those of the congregation. Twenty-seven brothers were registered as voters. Claassen, Cornelssen and Koop are not even mentioned. With the consent of the congregation, these imposed a penance upon themselves, to judge themselves quite in accordance with Claassen's character, publicly, for their false move taken on February 10. (However, see the critical footnote to the election list, *#157*).

§96 3. The Office of Elder in the M.B. Church.

Among the four candidates: Jakob Becker of Rudnerweide, Heinrich Huebert of Liebenau, August Srauss of Waldheim and Adreas Voth[42] of Pastva, the votes were divided as follows: Huebert, twenty-four,

Becker, sixteen, Strauss, three and Voth, eleven. Every voter, therefore, had voted twice. Even the candidates themselves had voted. According to Reimer's diary, Huebert and Becker were "accepted as their ministers from the hand of the Lord." It also stated that Brother Becker stepped down from his office in August of 1863 on the advice of the brethren, probably as a consequence of the aberrations of the "free" movement, which we will describe in greater detail below, and, with Brother Simon Harms, was elected as an "administrator" (in accordance with I Cor. 12:28), very likely for the purpose of organizing the emigration to the Kuban which was then just beginning. Thereupon Brother Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld was made Brother Huebert's assistant, as was Brother Bernhard Penner of Gnadenfeld later (now, after many vagaries, an Adventist). Heinrich Huebert was considered the first minister or "elder" and was formally given the title of "elder" considerably later through a subsequent solemn prayer of dedication by the congregation under the leadership and laying on of hands of the later Brother Johann Johann Fast of Rueckenau (then Halbstadt, since 1867 Huebert's assistant), an act that was also announced to all the Molotschna elders in writing. Till then, Huebert had always designated himself as "minister" in his signature. This last confirmation or ordination took place in the late summer of 1868 in the home of Brother Cornelius Neufeld in Neukirch. No definite date has been ascertained. Later H. Huebert transferred the office of elder for the M.B. Church in the Molotschna to Abram Schellenberg, now in America, and for the congregation in the Kuban to Br. Daniel Fast, now retired. Elder Huebert became an invalid prematurely. This was probably largely due to a difficult ten-month imprisonment in connection with matters relating to the M.B. Church as a consequence of a false accusation in 1865. But in spite of the fact that he was always very sickly, he reached the ripe old age of eighty-five and died in the Kuban in 1895, weary of life and filled with the desire to see his Savior, whose appearances he had daily expected as an unshakable "believer in the Kingdom." Of all the Brethren he was the most profound thinker; in conversation and mutual edification he was both profound and interesting; but because he possessed a very weak voice and his memory often failed him because of his physical infirmities to the point of fainting, he was not an eloquent speaker. Nevertheless, during his term as bishop, not only did the congregations in the Molotschna and the Kuban become organized, but were also firmly established in their evangelical order. (Huebert's "Acknowledgement" cf. *#108*: Letter of Elder Johann Harder of Nov. 12, 1862). In the Chortitza-Einlage M.B. congregation the ordering of the office took a different course[43] (cf. further XIXff.).

XVII.
FURTHER DIFFICULTIES AND FINAL VICTORY OF THE M.B. CHURCH AS A LEGAL MENNONITE CONGREGATION IN THE MIDST OF THE SOUTH RUSSIAN MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD

§97 1. In the meantime, the congregation suffered not a little oppression: incarceration (Br. Jakob Wall), forced labor, etc. The worst were the impediments placed in the members' way with regard to their civic and business life as a consequence of the church ban with its total "avoidance" which each congregation imposed on all those who had left the church. The exceptions were Gnadenfeld, which only excluded the brethren "from its spiritual fellowship," and Ohrloff, which, in line with the position it had already adopted in the issue, exercised no ecclesiastical discipline at all on those who joined the Brethren from their congregation. Well-to-do people, such as Isaak Matthies of Rudnerweide, became impoverished as a result of this "ban." It was difficult to bear the constant threats of banishment to Siberia issued very seriously at the time by many influential opponents, which then sounded so infinitely gruesome, and the terribly rude, hateful and scornful tone employed by the greater and lesser local authorities as well as by the majority of the members of society in their intercourse with the secessionists, who, in other ways, were bound to them by close ties of kinship, neighborliness and business. Very often wives suffered severely at the hands of their husbands, husbands at the hands of their wives, children at the hands of their parents and parents at the hands of their children (!), and servants at the hands of their employers. The last of these—the torment from "your own household"—was no doubt the most difficult to endure. But the archival material also proves that some of the suffering members of the young congregation did not always conduct themselves in a God-pleasing manner. This conduct, according to the originals of their own letters, was encouraged by a few of the influential leaders of the "Liberated" (cf. below), against which Reimer and his companions did earnest battle in the very heart of the congregation, and that not without success. One example out of many shall demonstrate how rude the treatment of the pious often was. During the time Claassen was in St. Petersburg, his second oldest son met one of the village worthies while on a walk behind his garden: "Well, you pious little devil, where is your father?"—was the hateful and contemptuous way in which the "Ohmke" addressed the frightened child. The congregation did indeed weary "of living with those who hate peace." (Reimer's diary.)

§98 2. Johann Claassen's second journey to St. Petersburg on behalf of the M.B. Church. As a result of the constantly worsening conditions and

the threats to imprison Claassen, the latter travelled quietly to St. Petersburg a second time at the behest and expense of the Brethren. He arrived there toward the end of November, 1860, and did not leave the capital until June, 1862. His activity there on behalf of civic and ecclesiastical rights of existence culminated in a most humble petition to His Imperial Majesty of May 15, 1862, the content of which will be given below (XXV.)

§99 3. In the meantime we shall pursue the essential ecclesiastical events, the struggle for the preservation of the Mennonite privileges and for recognition as an independent Mennonite congregation in the local area. On December 27, 1860, the Brethren wrote the following letter (given below) to the Supervisory Commission.[44] This body had, according to the report of the colonial administration, ordered the Area Administrative Office and the church elders, on November 29: "1) To present a list of names of all the Mennonites who belong to the new sect; 2) to state which of them are the main propagators of this sect and exercise the greatest influence upon the minds and hearts of the rest of the Mennonites; 3) what kind of steps had been taken thus far by the local authorities for the suppression of this sect, and whether or not any of the sectaries had been subjected to any kind of punishment, and if so, who, for what reason, and how many times; and, 4) what kind of methods could be employed to both hinder the spread and completely exterminate the movement." The brethren wrote:

"To the Supervisory Commission in Odessa:

". . . We are not a newly arisen sect, as the illustrious Supervisory Commission loves to call us, but are the seed of the imperishable Word of God, which was preached to us by the apostles, explained by the Holy Spirit, and at the same time are a fruit of the living faith of our beloved progenitor Menno Simons, who held to the same church organization and confession of faith as we do; consequently, we have the right to call ourselves the truly genuine Mennonite family. . . .

"The reason why we did not write to our committee earlier is that we knew our good name had already been considerably blackened; the only thing we have left to add is that we do not necessarily detect a negative attitude in the first three points of the above orders to our Area Administrative Office, but detect at least this much in the (last) one that it,[45] too, appears to be guilty of seeking means with which to eradicate our fellowship. In response we say to you quite frankly that it is a futile effort; for the leader of our fellowship is called Jesus Christ, highly to be praised in all eternity, who has given us the promise: 'No one shall pluck you from my hand,' and calls out to us: 'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom' (Luke 12:32). We

have confidently believed this till now and intend similarly to believe His Word in the future, being determined, in case one no longer wishes to permit us to do this, to give our life for it. But we still believe and are of the conviction that the illustrious committee also knows something of the injury done to and deterioration of the church and its members by the Ohrloff 'Barley Story'[46] and the like (compare above *#52*[2]), and how the elders and ministers, without cause, today live in disunity and conflict with their members; and we do not believe that the illustrious committee will condemn those to punishment or even consent to having their name removed from the list of the colonists who believe and live according to the Scriptures, who cannot be accused of any political offence, and who, in contrast, live quiet lives; rather we believe, that as much as lies in its power, it will take us under its protection. . . . Finally, we would like to petition the illustrious committee, to scrutinize all the documents beginning with no. 1, which have passed between us, the elders, and the Area Administrative Office, in order to arrive at an unequivocal conclusion. All of the documents are still available at the local Area Administrative Office, in case they should not yet be in your hands.

"And now we commend you and ourselves to God, to whom we raise our hearts and hands, petitioning Him for His gracious protection who has also made us the following promise: 'I am with you to the end of the world' (Matt. 28:20).

"Humbly signed by: Heinrich Huebert, minister, Wilhelm Bartel, Jakob Reimer, August Strauss, Jakob Giesbrecht. Berdiansk, December 27, 1860."

§99(2) 4. We are convinced that this petition made a strong impression upon the Supervisory Commission. The threatening and deprecatory tone, which pervaded the Commission's paper of November 29, from now on gave place to an impartial and conciliatory manner of speech in the orders to the local colonial authorities. Meanwhile, those cool rays may already have begun, which Privy Councillor Hahn (during Cornies' time president of the Supervisory Commission), Claassen's fatherly friend, advisor and protector, from time to time directed toward the Commission. (Compare XXV.: "Documentary Supplement.") The words: "to give our life," may sound like empty phrases today—they were not. For Huebert, like Jung Stilling, Auberle, Philipp Paulus, Hoffmann and others, was completely captivated by the Daniel-like apocalyptic expectation of the imminent end of the world and its mighty battles. And although Huebert may not have sacrificed his life, he did sacrifice his vigor and his all-too-frail health during the ten months he was imprisoned in a mouldy, cold and wretched place. And Brother Abraham

Cornelssen was driven out of the school in Elizabethtal and the colony during the winter and was forced to live in a damp and chilly sod hut on the Nogai steppes. Abraham Braun[47] of Grossweide, a "brother of the Mennonite Church," then a respected man and member of the Gnadenfeld congregation, saved him and his family from fever and death in that he dared to take the fugitives under his protection. The others who wanted to move away in order to earn their bread in peace were denied passes so that, as Reimer of Gnadenfeld wrote, "they would be squeezed back into the church."

§100 5. To the above-mentioned order of the Supervisory Commission of November 29, by way of the Area Administrative Office, to "the honorable church Elder Johann Harder of Blumenstein," the latter answered in as courageous and manly a manner as had the "brethren" (even though he was only one against five bishops and was opposed by the five and all the powerful civil authorities):

"To the Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt:

After I have drawn in information regarding those Mennonites who have seceded from our decadent [!] churches as a consequence of the letter from the Area Administrative Office of the 14th of this month, I report to it that only Heinrich Huebert of Liebenau from our congregation belongs to them; as far as an answer to the second point is concerned, I am, at this point, unable to say with any certainty who currently exercises the greatest influence upon them. As far as the third point is concerned, I believe that it should be addressed to the civil authorities. I can give no other answer to the fourth point than the one I have already given in the statement of March 29 of this year, which I here repeat verbatim: 'The means [. . . identical to the document of March 29, to . . .] to the praise of the pious. Blumstein, December 30, 1860. Johann Harder, elder.'

§101 6. The following document once again answers the specific question regarding the attitude of the "brethren" to the Mennonite confession of faith with great clarity:

"To all of the church elders of the Molotschna Mennonite Colony:

Greetings in Christ, who shall have the preeminence in all things! Col. 1:18.

Since we are in complete agreement with the present confession of faith and not only believe in it but also desire to act in accordance with it, we ask you herewith and request permission from our superiors to move away from here—would you, for your part, place any obstacles in our path? Liebenau, January 1, 1861. Heinrich Huebert, minister, Jakob Becker, minister."

§102 7. Meanwhile Claassen labored spiritedly in St. Petersburg for over a year to acquire land—whether by lease, purchase, or from the crown—and the right to emigrate before he, of necessity, began to complain about the local authorities. For some time even Amur was under consideration as a place of settlement, with the captain of a Danish sailing vessel having already been contacted to take them there "around Africa." The Suez Canal, the trans-Siberian Railway—these were then all enigmas of the future! It must be stressed that these "thoughts about emigration," corresponding to Huebert's and the brethren's "concepts of the Kingdom" in general, were brought into ideological connection with the coming of the Lord and the preceding apostasy and regarded as an article of faith, though of secondary or even lesser importance. Bartel of Berdiansk compared Claassen to Moses, and foretold the ingratitude that would be his. Likewise Reimer of Gnadenfeld, who repeatedly compared him with Zinzendorf. This was the prevailing sentiment throughout the new congregation. Claassen pursued the matter most realistically in St. Petersburg, presenting it at first exclusively as a consequence of the burning issue of the current land shortage. (The "land question" was then just surfacing in the Molotschna.) Only with the utmost reluctance did he link the issue with the oppression resulting from the "secession," because the refusal on the part of the Area Administrative Office to issue him and his companions passports had irresistibly forced him in this direction. (He sought advice only from Privy Councillor Hahn, and it was only later that he informed him of his predicament.) Thus asserts Privy Councillor A. Klaus in the officious book, *Unsere Kolonien,* who, as an official of the Ministry of Crown Lands, to whom the Mennonites, as all other colonists, were then subject, knew Claassen well.

§103 8. The five elders set forth their reasons for not being able to recognize the "brethren" as Mennonites in the following way:

"To the Supervisory Commission in Odessa:

We can no longer recognize Claassen and his accomplices [companions] as Mennonites for the following reasons: 1) In their document of January 6, 1860, they state literally: 'therefore we dissociate ourselves entirely from this corrupt church.' [48] 2) In accordance with Matt. 13:24-30 we believe that such as do not possess the true faith will also be found in a Christian church and therefore extend holy communion to all those who have been baptized upon their acknowledged confession of faith and do not live in manifest sin. The secessionists, however, teach: 'Holy communion can only be extended to the true believers,' and therefore label the celebration of the Lord's Supper in our congregations a devil's service.[49] 3) In our congregations it has always

been the custom to pour water upon the head of the baptismal candidate. These teach, however: To baptize means to immerse [compare further XX: 'Baptism'], and have now begun to immerse, hither and yon in the streams of the steppes, not only the unbaptized youth, but to rebaptize by immersion all those who have long since been admitted to the church through baptism. 4) . . . [Here the five elders censure—and justifiably so—certain degenerate elements in the worship services of the brethren; cf. *#115* further concerning this: 'The Movement of Excessive Exuberance' in the M.B. Church] . . . 'But since we immediately notified the governmental authorities of them at their inception, we earnestly protest being in any way responsible for them. To this our statement we add the following request: that the governmental authorities initiate appropriate disciplinary measures[50] so that those who have left the church lose their harmful influence upon our congregations.[51] However, should they arrive at the point—which until now was not to be expected—where they should desire once again to join our congregations in the manner prescribed by our church, we would be more than willing to readmit them to our fellowship.

Given June 10, 1861. The church elders: Ratzlaff, Toews, Wedel, Warkentin, Lenzmann."

§104 9. Pastor Dobbert, in the document cited above, expresses his opinion with regard to the actions of the five elders: . . . "It is clearly evident from this report [concerning the above events] that Claassen and his adherents did not enter the conflict with carnal weapons; he had clearly articulated and denounced the breakdown of church discipline, the Achilles heel [the weakest point] of the church, and had insisted upon reform. [The pastor finds it hardly credible that contrite souls, who blame themselves, are placed under the ban, as indeed happened in many of the congregations, and then continues]: Was Claassen in the wrong with his demand? Is his point of view an exaggerated one, as the majority of the elders charged, which derived from a one-sided interpretation of the Holy Scriptures? Does he contradict his own confessional writings? Do the confessional writings of the Mennonites [which Claassen and his companions quoted on January 6] and the Holy Scriptures teach the errors Claassen and his companions adhere to? If the elders, at their conference [of January 18] had been able to see and hear the undeniable and unconcealable truth enunciated by their opponents and begun to root out the abuses, a reconciliation could still have been possible and the rift avoided. [He quotes the statement of the brethren of January 23.] Should one have praised and approved the fact that they turned these people over to the civil authorities without further ado? I trust everyone will grant that the conference of elders [of January

18] chose the most inappropriate and unspiritual means wherewith to avoid a separation, . . . and thereby . . . prematurely braided a martyr's crown . . . for Claassen and his companions. . . . How much saner and more refreshing is the pronouncement of the Ohrloff congregation. . . . Given the kind of outlook [of the five elders] prevailing among those who should have judged spiritual matters in a spiritual manner, withdrawal from the church, more than ever before, became a matter of conscience for Claassen and his adherents . . . [In addition, Dobbert sharply reprimands the excesses of the 'Exuberant Movement' and, from his Lutheran standpoint, cannot understand how the Brethren could claim the right to establish their own church and confirm teachers (ministers) through their own authority; but Claassen, in his most humble petition of May 15, 1862, clearly establishes the ecclesiastical and civil right to do so from a Mennonite point of view. Dobbert continues]: It is not these aberrations, but the essential truth, stated and developed above, which the Brethren captured, in contrast to the rotten and disordered character of the fellowship out of which the so-called 'Huepfer' came, that is the cause, even today [1864], for their increase in number, that new members are constantly being added to them through baptism." [The complete document is given under *#170.*]

§105 10. Johann Claassen's petition of May 15, 1862, to His Majesty on behalf of the Molotschna brethren (along with those of the already-constituted Einlage M.B. Church in the Chortitza District, which had also sent its representative in the person of Gerhard Wieler to St. Petersburg, and who also submitted a petition to the monarch which said essentially the same thing as Claassen's, cf. XIX ff.), along with the request for unrestricted civil activity and passports, culminated in the following presentation of the fundamental Mennonite principles and ecclesiastical rights, contained in the *Promemoria* attached to the petition.

"The Molotschna Mennonites, in the Province of Taurida, base their internal administration, in matters of faith and church discipline, upon the Holy Gospel and the teaching of Menno Simons. The entire Mennonite church order is rooted primarily in the principle: freedom of conscience and of personal conviction. The Russian imperial law plainly guarantees the Mennonites complete freedom of religion[52] and absolutely avoids any kind of direct or indirect interference in the internal affairs of the church and its discipline. The Mennonite Church Council, too, in keeping with the teachings of the Gospel and Menno Simons, is, for its part, supposed to avoid all matters that pertain to the secular authorities, and to give to God the things that are God's and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. On the basis of these principles the

Molotschna Mennonites, quite apart from divisions in regard to civil matters (in which context every colony also forms an independent community), are also divided into separate congregations or fellowships with respect to their church organization, each with its own ministers and elders at its head. The actual difference between the latter and the civil community, whose organization is determined by positive law, consists in the fact that the church fellowship is built, not by means of the law, but through the free decisions and in accordance with the personal convictions of the fellow believers themselves, irrespective of geographical, administrative or other factors which determine the organization of a civil community. As a consequence, each ecclesiastical community may embrace a more or less substantial number of administrative communities; in contrast to this, however, every individual Mennonite—in the individual civil communities as well as in the family—is completely free to join any particular ecclesiastical fellowship, as the Molotschna Mennonite fellowships reveal. There can therefore be no doubt about the personal right of every Mennonite either freely to withdraw from a fellowship which does not conform to his convictions, or, as the case may be, to help establish a new church—all the more so since the civil law does not address itself to this matter while the Holy Scriptures and Menno Simons make it into a veritably unavoidable duty for every true believer, in a given instance, to withdraw from such a fellowship. Similarly, it follows that it is the right and obligation of the church of expel its corrupt members—to ban them.

"On the basis of this very teaching the 'Lichtenauer' and the so-called *Kleine Gemeinde* were established in Molotschna prior[53] to 1820. The first of these broke away from the Ohrloff congregation and, in spite of the fact that the injustice was clearly on its side, now constitutes a majority, while the so-called *Kleine Gemeinde* was made up of members derived from all other congregations, and, like our present congregation, initially severely persecuted. Nevertheless, both are recognized and continue to exist to this very day. . . ." [There follows the historical presentation of the founding of the M.B. Church with documentation derived from those documents known to us, and others. Cf. the complete document below *#159.*]

§106 11. In his already-cited study *Unsere Kolonien,* Privy Councillor A. Klaus says the following concerning the outcome of this most humble petition: ". . . The government . . . did not long delay [naturally after extended investigations] in issuing a decree to the effect that these church divisions should in no wise be accompanied by a restriction of civil rights or persecution by the police authorities. . . ." [Compare "Documentary Supplement," *#160*d.]

§107 12. Meanwhile, the ecclesiastical and civil battle progressed. We will record only that in the documents which is most characteristic. Of interest is the following letter of the later Minister Bernhard Harder to the editor of the *Mennonitische Blaetter*, dated July 28, 1862.

"If you were in the vicinity, I would hasten to you for advice, for tomorrow I am to preach on the Gospel text: 'Beware of false prophets . . .' but am still not able to discover any point of contact. I wonder why they included a Gospel passage in the selected Bible readings that presents the majority of preachers in such a poor light, in which most of them have to preach their own death sentence. Yes, you see, that is how it is in our midst. Fruits!—O God be merciful! We have exhibited fruits of which we must be ashamed. Was it perhaps different at the time when one preached consecutively through the gospels? Or did they deliberately want to give the preacher an opportunity—in fact, force him—to preach to himself occasionally? Too often, one leaves himself out of the picture. There are those who fearfully adapt to the tastes and demands of the local congregation, which certainly does not like the preacher to use the second person address, but wants to hear 'we' and 'us.' A guest preacher I myself heard, said, 'The love for "us" brought me here (to preach the Word of God to us).' These often leave themselves out of the picture when it comes to ferreting out the false prophets and the ravenous wolves and showing them in the proper light. O may we all honestly begin to pray: 'Jesus, give us seeing eyes! etc.' May we stop hiding from ourselves, through real or imagined respect of office or through the sheep's clothing of hypocritical humility and respectability, the false prophet and wolf in us. But life is so comfortable among these false prophets. 'Peace, peace, there is no danger.' But—the fruits? O, there is no peace, and thus also no fruit of righteousness, no fruit of the Holy Spirit. Take note! The congregations of our people have become a morass, and vapors are rising out of the swamps, forming threatening storm clouds over us. Has not many a thunderbolt already shaken the foundations of our existence? How little would it take, on the part of Him before whose threat the earth flees and finds no refuge, to destroy us if He tired of being merciful, for we have earned it through willful sin and hardening of our hearts against the call of grace. Friend! brother! father! or whatever else you wish to be to me who am as yet a very inexperienced person in the service of the Word and the ways of God, I cast myself on your breast and weep, for things look very sad in our midst, and yet I love our people with the passion of a first love. Is there any way in which you could add to the fervor of prayer, or to the fervor of admonition to prayer through your sermons and publications? In any case, the time has come to lift up the tired hands and strengthen the weak knees. Like a woman in birth pangs, we should labor for the new birth of our people. Is the Lord's hand shortened? Has His ear become

hard of hearing? Or has His blood, the precious blood of Jesus, now lost its power and validity? O, what is lacking? We—the witnesses and watchmen—we are lacking. A large number of us lack the beginning letter of the alphabet, the capital 'A' of Christianity: 'Wake up, o man, from the sleep of sin, etc.'

"This is not due to our lack of learning—though it were desirable that matters stood differently among us even in this regard—it is due to our emptiness and estrangement from God. For many a simple craftsman, who has become a child of God through faith in Christ, could hardly read a word and has now become quite a scribe, educated for the kingdom, in a matter of a few years, because he not only read, but studied, and not only studied, but opened his heart and life to the divine revelation. But what can be expected from such full and self-satisfied preachers who do nothing to fill their office but occasionally read a sermon which has already been a family heirloom along with the office for half a century, without regard to whether or not it is appropriate in the present circumstances. There has even been preaching contrary to our confession of faith because the work of strangers has been used unexamined and unaltered. In copying a sermon, someone once attempted to make his version smoother and milder to please the people, and substituted 'eating and drinking' for 'devouring and consuming,' which had been condemned in the original. Thus he reprimanded people for eating and drinking as though it displeased the Lord. You see! And in spite of the coldness and indifference of the large majority of us, there is a longing in our area for the true bread of life, and there is a striving for it that cannot be subdued by violent measures. If only we shepherds were alive, then the sheep would hear our voice, and the awakening life would flow beautifully and appropriately within the guidelines of our confession. But now it is breaking out of the decayed forms, is flattening the rotten pillars that we are, and is working its own way, as it were, over our dead bodies, to freedom. There it now crests and flows in unbridled power until the Lord of the church will finally succeed in containing it, and we will be left with a dry form, with a husk lacking the seed, with a church lacking living members. That is what it looks like here. Anything that begins to live wants to escape, as though we were doomed to die. The harvest is great, but . . . pray the Lord of the harvest . . . Luke 10:2. The Lord grant us wisdom from above. Amen!"

§108 13. The formal ecclesiastical recognition of the M.B. Church in the Molotschna by Johann Harder, elder of Ohrloff, the actual mother church of the colony, in the name of his congregation of whom Senator Hahn said to Claassen: "You have Elder Harder to thank for your deliverance,"[54] is indisputably established in the documents of November 12, 1862, and December 24, 1863.

a) "To the Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt: From the elder of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt Church. Statement!

"The October 11, 1862, conference of municipal leaders in the Area Administrative Office regarding the matter of the Mennonites who seceded from the decadent (!) churches advanced the alternatives that either these people will have their colonial status rescinded and be exiled, or they will have to be recognized as a church with rights similar to those of other Mennonite churches in the future. Faced with these alternatives, our church declares that since the first alternative is not based on God's Word, we agree to the latter on the condition that when these people publish a confession of faith, it should correspond substantially with ours. Since upon investigation the secessionists declared their confession to be the same as ours, namely the confession of faith of the so-called united Flemish, Frisian and High German Anabaptist Mennonite Church, published by the Rudnerweide Church in South Russia, the Ohrloff-Halbstadt Church sees no hindrances to recognizing these Mennonites as a church and notifies the Area Administrative Office to that effect. Blumstein, November 12, 1862. Johann Harder, Elder."

b) The above, as all the previously cited documents of the Ohrloff elder, with the exception of the one immediately following, is published in the *Mennonitische Blaetter* of 1863.

c) As a result of a petition from the M.B. Church dated December 30, 1863, to the Ministry of Crown Lands, the five elders made the same presentation to their congregations that, according to the above document, Ohrloff had made: in spite of the fact that the congregations refused to recognize them, they would not give their consent, by majority vote, to "strike their names" and "send them away." According to the letters and diary of Jakob Reimer (Gnadenfeld), Elder Lenzmann's presentation of the proposal in favor of "deportation" in Gnadenfeld was more negative than positive and Abraham Matthies of Rudnerweide spoke against it in an especially vociferous manner. The *Kleine Gemeinde,* as always, remained neutral but friendly. According to the Minister Jakob Martens of Tiegenhagen and Privy Councillor Klaus, this was the last desperate attempt on the part of the agitated Mennonite local civil authorities to paralyze the effectiveness of Claassen's petition to His Majesty.

d) According to Brother Heinrich Epp's "Report," which is given below under XIX ff., the same procedure was used in the District of Chortitza, resulting in the same favorable outcome for the Brethren.

e) One year after the paper of November 12, 1862, had been drawn up, Johann Harder wrote to Heinrich Huebert (the original is extant: the text is written in the hand of the Minister Franz Isaak, but the signature

is in Harder's own hand; with it is a copy of the November 12, 1862, document also in Harder's own hand):

"To the Church Minister[55] Heinrich Huebert of Liebenau:

As far as the order given in the circular you mentioned in your letter of the 23rd of this month is concerned, I know that the Area Administrative Office has issued such an order on the 7th of this month under No. 12652; but whether this circular is based upon something the elders ascertained or whether the Area Administrative Office issued it only on its own authority, is entirely unknown to me,—and since you wish to know whether or not the Ohrloff-Halbstadt congregation is in agreement with this order[56] of the Area Administrative Office, the fact that this congregation recognizes you as a congregation of equal standing and rights with all the other Mennonite congregations, to which effect I informed the Area Administrative Office on behalf of my congregation on November 12, 1862, is proof of a negative response. Blumstein, December 24, 1863. Johann Harder, church elder."

f) The Molotschna Council of Church Leaders, naturally without the consent of the Ohrloff Elder Johann Harder and Elder Friesen of the *Kleine Gemeinde*, in 1864 once more, in a ceremonious and interesting manner, formulated the reason why they were unable to recognize the brethren as a congregation in the following way:

"To the Most Honorable Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt:

Although we, the undersigned church elders, some time ago orally declared to the honorable Area Administrative Office the reasons why we cannot recognize those members, who have left our congregations, as a Mennonite church, or hold their ecclesiastical acts to be legal and binding, we nevertheless deem it appropriate in this case to deliver our earlier declaration in writing to the Area Administrative Office, and that as follows: First: Our God is not a God of disorder, but of peace, as in all congregations of the saints, I Cor. 14:33, 40. According to this divine order, our Lord and Savior has, as Head of the Christian church and at His glorious ascension, ordained or dedicated the twelve apostles to their high and important office by the power of his high-priestly blessing, ten days later completing their preparation for this service through the gift of His Holy Spirit, Luke 24:50, 51; Matt. 28:20. By virtue of this office which they had received, these apostles, ordained by the Lord Himself, then from time to time founded congregations by ordaining elders and bishops, etc., etc., for the believers of a given place, installing them in their offices by the laying on of hands and command in the name of Christ, that they might, as the servants of Christ and not in their own willfulness, act as the servants and stewards of the divine mysteries and administer the institutions founded by Christ as He instituted them.

Mark 3:14; Acts 1:15-26; and 14:23; I Cor. 4:1; Titus 1:5ff.; II Tim. 1:6. Since those who have seceded from us have quite arbitrarily—that is, in contradiction to the regulations of our church based upon the foregoing—appointed their leaders[57] without ecclesiastical ordination and with equal arbitrariness [?] depose them from their offices, we cannot recognize them as a Mennonite congregation allied with us. Second: According to our apostolic church order, only the ordained elders are authorized to administer the holy sacraments; marriages can also be legally performed only by properly appointed ministers [in most congregations of the time not ordained by the laying on of hands]. Since the secessionists have neither a church-ordained elder nor a properly appointed minister, and since they absolutely refuse to tie the teaching ministry of the church and the administration of the sacraments to an ecclesiastical office, but on the contrary have every member who feels called to do so administer these ordinances [? why, then, did they elect teachers and ministers?],—indeed, even the female members speak in their meetings [but only in intimate home gatherings!] and pray aloud—obviously in contradiction to I Cor. 12; II Cor. 5:18-20; James 3:1; I Cor. 14:34, 35 and I Tim. 2:12—therefore, according to the rules of our church, we can neither condone nor recognize as legal such unauthorized practices of theirs as baptism, communion and marriage. Thirdly: Finally, the secessionists have demonstrated sufficiently both by the disorderly and tumultuous manner in which they conduct their so-called devotional meetings, their abuse of holy baptism—in that they rebaptize, and that indeed even several times [?], persons who have already been baptized upon their own request and confession of faith, as though the Lord God could perjure Himself—as well as in the burning of recognized Christian books of sermons and devotional literature that they have nothing in common with the Mennonite congregations. For all of these matters have no basis whatever either in our confessional statements or the Holy Scriptures. Since the religious freedom promised us was confirmed in the first paragraph of the 'letter of privileges' so graciously granted the Mennonites of Southern Russia, according to which we may without hindrance practice our traditional principles of faith, we consider ourselves bound by office, duty and conscience—as much as we pity those who have gone astray—to adhere to our declaration as given above until they, having honestly recognized and regretted their errors, will once again seek reinstatement in our Mennonite brotherhood and traditional apostolic church organization. The conference at Gnadenfeld, December 15, 1864. The Church Elders." The signatures are missing. The copy in our possession is written in Minister Franz Isaak's hand and carried the following inscription: "Received from the Minister Franz Isaak as authentic in the spring of 1896. David Schellenberg [elder of the M.B. Church of Rueckenau in the

Molotschna]. Compare *#4*e, footnote, and *#15*a and footnote; cf. also "The Office of Elder in the M.B. Church," *#96* and *#62(2)*: "List of Elders of the Mennonite Church Congregations"; also the footnote to the preceding "e" in *#108*. One should note that, as before, in their position taken in principle, their tone and style had become absolutely dignified, impartial and truly theological. What was the reason for this?

§109 14. Meanwhile, Claassen had returned from St. Petersburg on June 30, 1862, furnished with a passport from the St. Petersburg police upon the intercession of Senator Hahn and the Ministry of Crown Lands which, as the highest authority for all the settlers, provided him with passports for one-and-a-half years. (The original is still extant.) At one point, when Claassen in fear showed the gentlemen of the ministry a letter from the Area Administrative Office (the original is also extant; cf. *#159*e), in which they threatened to have him brought home like a vagabond without a passport and under police escort, they broke out into a gay and resounding laughter, quite conclusively proved to him that the pass from their ministry was much more authoritative than the one from the Molotschna Mennonite Area Administrative Office, and emphatically assured him that he would return to his home a "free man." Claassen, however, who had really believed "that it could come to this," returned to his quarters and on his knees gave hearty thanks to his beloved Savior. Moreover, on his return journey Claassen had in his possession a sealed package from Count Muraviov, the Minister of War, which he was to deliver personally to Count Evdokimov, the General of the Army in the Caucasus. All of this impressed the people of the Molotschna. Nevertheless, Claassen and the brethren were only given passes upon the direct order from St. Petersburg; and even then, in order to receive his passport, the Area Administrative Office, in order to irritate him, made him come from Liebenau to Halbstadt six times (at a distance of approximately 22 versts one way, or a total of approximately 264 versts!). The letter from the Minister of War, with which Claassen and the brethren travelled to the Caucasus in the fall of 1862, enabled the Molotschna and Chortitza brethren to establish the currently flourishing settlements of Wohldemfuerst and Alexanderfeld—now Velikokniashesk and Alexandrodar—of 1864-66 in the Kuban. (Claassen's activities in St. Petersburg and the settlement in the Kuban are described in greater detail in XXV.: "Documentary Supplement.")

§110 15. The Question regarding Marriage in the Molotschna M.B. Church

a) The circular mentioned in Harder's document of December 24, 1863, shows how everyone was concerned to inflict pain and dishonor upon

the M.B. Church after the government had forced the local authorities to issue passports and remove the civil restrictions. The question of marriage, which this circular treats in such an offensive manner, was conclusively settled in the Molotschna only around 1865 and later, after David Friesen had stepped down from office and Franz Dyck of Blumenort and Cornelius Toews of Tiege (who died as a member of the M.B. Church), both members of the Ohrloff congregation, had become the colony administrators.

b) The fine circular to the village mayors reads as follows:

"Since some among the so-called joyous brethren, in spite of the order issued against them, not to undertake any ecclesiastical acts until their newly-formed sect should be recognized[58] by the authorities and our entire Council of Elders, continue to baptize and perform marriages,[59] the Area Administrative Office orders the village offices not to recognize these marriages as valid or in any way to view the persons, living in this kind of unchastity, as a family.[60] On the contrary, each member is to remain on his original family register and the illegitimately-born children are to be appended to the family register of the respective female persons. Since dubious opinions regarding the foregoing matter have arisen in some of the village offices, the Area Administrative Office orders the village offices to enforce the order as given above and to keep correct copies of the same on hand. The Area Administrative Office at Halbstadt, December 7, 1863. No. 12652. Colony Administrator Friesen."

c) The Brethren replied energetically in a presentation which had been inserted into the *Promemoria* of a petition to the Ministry of Crown Lands of December 30, 1863. (Cf. further *#175*(2).) The Brethren wrote: ". . . Marriages take place in the Lord according to the Word of God, as can also be seen from article 10 of the Confession of Faith[61] of the Anabaptist-Mennonite churches concerning holy matrimony. With this [i.e. the development of the M.B. Church and its rights described at the outset and as contained in Claassen's petition to His Imperial Majesty] we believe that we have proved that our church does not rest upon a self-constituted, but upon a biblical foundation, a foundation in complete agreement with the fundamental principles of Menno Simons and, consequently,[62] also in agreement with the Word of God. Therefore the elders have nothing to fear from us except that their godless and arrogant actions will be brought to light. We believe and recognize that we are the Mennonites who are meant by the charter of liberties and also act in accordance with the rights it grants us. Therefore the Area Administrative Office and the above-named Council of Elders should remember that not only does it not lie within their power, but is instead an astonishing presumption, to declare that the marriages performed in our church are invalid and that the village offices [which were in charge

of vital statistics] should regard the children born from such marriages as born in unchastity . . ." [Given more fully in XXV.]

d) This petition brought about the repeal of the hindrances placed in the way of marriages and, most importantly, brought the Brethren the permission to resettle in the Caucasus "as Mennonites" where they had already been assigned land. This permission was granted them by the Ministry of Crown Lands on March 4, 1864, in the name of "the Mennonites of the Molotschna Mennonite District, Heinrich Huebert and companions,"—"of which His Highness, the Governor of the Caucasus, had been informed."

d) The same were attained for the Brethren of the Chortitza District (cf. XXV).

§111 16. Thus the Brethren of both districts had retained the victory with regard to ecclesiastical and civil rights: in that the high authorities had, in 1865, prohibited the confusing of ecclesiastical with civil matters (cf. Privy Councillor A. Klaus); next, through the solemn recognition of the M.B. Church by the Ohrloff-Halbstadt Mennonite congregation; further, through the formal granting of land to the Brethren in 1863 as "Mennonites" in the Caucasus; and, finally through the Ministry of Crown Lands' drastic decree of March 4, 1864, referred to above (identical for the Molotschna and Chortitza Districts) and which was reinforced through the confirmation of the Mennonite rights to the Kuban Mennonite Brethren by His Imperial Highness, the Grand Duke and Governor of the Caucasus in May, 1866.

§112 17. The great debt of gratitude which the M.B. Church owes to the Ohrloff congregation of that day is quite evident. The M.B. Church documented this debt of gratitude on the occasion of its 25th anniversary, January 6, 1885, in Rueckenau by rising to its feet and by a solemn declaration, as well as by a solemn prayer of thanksgiving to God on bended knees. We confidently hope that the M.B. Church will, with good will to all and malice to none, pray to God: "And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us!"

§113 18. We shall close the chapter on the religious controversy of the Molotschna M.B. Church, in which the Ohrloff and Gnadenfeld of that day played such important and diversified roles, with a note by the author written in the summer of 1890.[63]

a) "In the last years of his life, the late Bernhard Harder, this dear, patient brother of all brethren, communicated with me regarding his clash with the then deceased Elder Lenzmann and Minister Heinrich Franz

because of his favorable reports concerning the Brethren issue to the *Mennonitische Blaetter* and Pastor Dobbert, and their subsequent reconciliation. He said that Elder Lenzmann in his old age had been a dear and humble brother, who trusted in and depended only upon the mercy of Jesus. Death often separates brethren while they are still in a state of mutual misunderstanding. We regret this deeply, but do not wish to add to this by an overly critical judgment of our own. 'Blessed are the peacemakers.'

b) "During the winter of 1886-87 in the Kuban, Brother Abram Schellenberg, now an elder in America, told me of a meeting he had had with the late Elder Lenzmann. At the beginning of the '70s (I believe), Elder Schellenberg visited the church elders on behalf of the M.B. Church in order to win their recognition, perhaps more because of the Mennonite civil rights in relation to the military service law,[64] which was then in the offing. Elder Lenzmann addressed him rudely, made derogatory insinuations about Schellenberg being too young for the office of elder, reminded him of the follies and several instances of sin in the M.B. Church during the first half of the '60s,—laid these follies—recognized, condemned and confessed by the church in 1865, as well as the sins it had already judged [compare Chap. XVIII],—at the feet of the entire M.B. Church during the time of Schellenberg's visit, and finally, using the form of address 'You are . . .,' he called Schellenberg and the church very coarse and uncomplimentary names, alluding to the above-named incidents of some ten years earlier, during which memories of past insults moved him (Lenzmann) to tears of anger. Brother Schellenberg also sat there quite dejected with tears of insult in his eyes, and finally said quietly: 'You offend me; these accusations do not apply to me and the present church.' (Naturally, I cannot reconstruct his exact words.) Then Elder Lenzmann said: 'In that case, forgive me if I have unjustly offended you.' (As is known, the question of recognition on the part of the 'five congregations' was then still in doubt.) Whereupon there followed a friendly invitation to coffee. This is all that I have come to know of a 'reconciliation' or rapprochement with the offended Elder Lenzmann, embittered[65] to the point of advocating persecution. He was the only elder who was asked by the Brethren to celebrate a special communion service in their circle before 1860, and who during that time was mocked as the 'elder of the Stundists and bigots' by the ignorant and spiritually dead masses.

c) "For a while, especially during 1865, I[66] myself attended the Gnadenfeld church services as well as a number of houses. At that time I vacillated considerably as to which congregation, the Gnadenfeld or Mennonite Brethren, I should join through holy baptism. The forms in the M.B. Church [cf. further XVIII: 'The June Reform' of 1865] led me

to consider baptism by immersion and thus led me into the latter church. During my first visits to the Gnadenfeld congregation I was quite astonished to hear the very things being preached and enunciated in the pastoral prayers in that 'apostate' congregation (as it was called in the religious sphere where I was influenced) which I considered and still consider to be the central concern of the M.B. Church both before and after its withdrawal: conversion to God through repentance and faith in the reconciling grace in Jesus Christ and a life of sanctification according to the rules of the gospel through the gift of grace of the spirit of Christ. The private conversations, however, even those in Lenzmann's[67] presence, repulsed me because of the hostile tone they assumed as soon as talk centered on the M.B. Church, whose central concern, especially the attempt to cleanse and discipline itself, they seemed unable or refused to understand. I was especially disturbed by a conversation concerning the persecution in the then new Baptist movement[68] among the Lutherans in the Province of Kherson, in which Elder Lenzmann's sympathy was quite obviously on the side of the persecutor, Provost Fletnitzer (Odessa). I nevertheless have recollections and impressions of Gnadenfeld's spiritual life[69] from my early youth, before the divisions, impressions which I can only compare with the wafting of a Pentecost breeze and the promises of spring. Hence, I have never lost my love and my fondest hopes and wishes for Gnadenfeld. These impressions of Gnadenfeld's spiritual life in the '50s (left with me by my later mother and her friends,[70] as well as by my older sisters) are confirmed by the materials I have copied, as well as others, and are a guarantee to me of an even more beautiful future for Gnadenfeld. That which is alive in Gnadenfeld, and that which is alive in Rueckenau (the center of the M.B. Church) must unite in a spontaneous handskake of brotherly love above the grave of the old quarrels and old resentments. And this shaking of hands must take place between all vital Christians in all Mennonite congregations—and in all Christian confessions—even while faithfully adhering to one's own peculiar insights and duties. I believe that if Lenzmann and Nikolai Schmidt had—unperturbed by Heinrich Franz and Johann Schmidt and similar harsh and one-sided men in the Mennonite Church and 'Templers'—been able to hold together with a Johann Claassen and Jakob Reimer—uninfluenced by the extremists in their camp—as they should have, since all four of them were Christians—held together in spite of and for all that!—the story of our spiritual and intellectual development would have taken a different and more beautiful course." (Thus far the note of 1890.)

d) Postscript of 1904. In order to do justice to Elder August Lenzmann, one must read the following chapter on the "exuberant and liberated movement" in the M.B. Church and realize the kind of

impressions which these aberrations would make upon a man strongly inclined to conservatism and strict orthodoxy, a man who, moreover, had been made apprehensive by the many incidents which had earlier shaken the congregation entrusted to his care, who had become minister and elder under very difficult congregational circumstances, and who, furthermore, had experienced a great deal of personal friction with brethren of the movement who later formed the M.B. Church; thus, for example, in the "Brotherhood School Dispute," in which these brethren, though (as we believe) essentially in the right, most certainly did not prove themselves to be angels, and caused Lenzmann, in his role of referee resulting from his position as elder, to be not a little plagued by Claassen's group on the one hand and Johann Schmidt's on the other (*##51 & 52*). At the same time, one should remember the harsh treatment to which Ohrloff (B. Fast) had subjected Gnadenfeld in those bitter times, and which the old inhabitants of Gnadenfeld could not forget or forgive for many years (*#49*). And now Ohrloff stood there as the defender of the brethren but at the same time found itself embroiled in a dispute with the "five elders," that is to say, their congregations, concerning other questions of law (the "Halbstadt Church—Building and Barley Dispute"[71] —*#52*[2]), where, once again, absolute justice was not on one or the other side—even though there may have been more on Ohrloff's side—something we cannot deal with here specifically for reasons of space and purpose. Although all of this may not justify the position Lenzmann espoused after 1860—with his great intelligence and much broader perspective, which placed him above all the other "five elders," with the long and very instructive history of his congregation, which he knew. With his more tranquil and dignified temperament, he should have stood above the parties and partisanship—if all of this does not justify him, it does go a long way toward excusing him. What would the M.B. Church in Russia and America say today if people were once again to be found in her midst who wished to resurrect the "movement of excessive exuberance?"! Uncompromising excommunication could be the only possible response to their efforts.

XVIII.

THE "FREE AND EXUBERANT MOVEMENT" IN THE ORGANIZED M.B. CHURCH AND ITS FINAL CONQUEST

§114 1. We must devote the following chapter on the internal conflicts of the Molotschna M.B. Church to the "free and exuberant" movement. For a "brother," it will prove to be less pleasant reading than the preceding one. In their official documents—a remarkable guidance of God—the "brethren" have been kept from enunciating any kind of

religious nonsense. As childish as their more intimate church life may manifest itself to be from time to time, as soon as they act in the name of the church their written documents are nearly invariably couched in a sober and manly tone.

§115 2. Letters concerning the "exuberant movement." We learned to know the "joyous brethren," or the "false movement," as Heinrich Huebert described it, already in the section on Pastor Wuest. It was during Claassen's second absence in St. Petersburg that this movement noticeably began to express itself in the organized M.B. Church. For the sake of the truth we must also write this chapter, which, unlike the preceding one, is not a credit to the young church. We shall describe these aberrations by means of a few letters which, like photographs, accurately portray those times and come from brethren of differing persuasions, such as Wilhelm Bartel, who, of all the important early Mennonite brethren, adhered the longest and most closely to Kappes, later falling into the opposite extreme and finally being strongly drawn toward the Hoffmanite Temple Church. W. Bartel was a very talented person—though not educated enough for his talents nor sanctified deeply enough by his Christianity—altogether honest, with a marvelous memory, vivid imagination and great eloquence, especially captivating in his prayers, and enormously talented musically. The first letter that we have from him already reveals the exaggerations and imbalance in his Christianity.

a) Wilhelm Bartel's letters. He writes to Johann Claassen of Liebenau in 1854, that is at a time when all of the disciples of Wuest (#51 &52), among whom Bartel was an important member, were still, without exception, gathered around the "pastor": 1) "Dear Brother Claassen! Greetings in God's name. How are you? Does Jesus still live? I mean, in you. Well, if so, then let things be as they may; I have heard enough. We rejoice with one another in the living Savior who reveals His life in the hearts of poor sinners; I, too, dear brother, can rejoice openly. O, how sweet the sound: Savior, Jesus, Immanuel, Father, Christ; all names fit for a poor, lost, depraved mankind and generation of sinners, that is, even for me, as hand to glove! And how precious that we may read this in the eternal Word of Truth. Only for such lost, depraved and torn souls, who can neither be restored nor patched up, only for these are they available. Praise God, they are also meant for me! It therefore means that I, too, must rejoice, but not because I no longer sin, am already free from many an evil, live more piously, have holier thoughts or other similar things. Not at all, but only in the mercy of Jesus which is revealed in the blood of Jesus Christ; it is in this that we want to rejoice, and that daily and hourly. Indeed, we want to rejoice only as godless though justified

children of grace and cough in the devil's eye.[72] Such verses as the following are especially dear to me: We are justified by His grace, and that apart from works, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; and: And to one who does not work but trusts Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. A blessed poet writes: Not in piety nor prayer, no, faith alone can justify. And this we find hard to swallow, do we not? Let us rejoice if the Lord brings us more and more to naught, even if, in the end, we can no longer pray, only believe! Woltersdorf writes: Therefore, learn but to have faith, every day but to have faith; e'en though Satan takes all else, walk the blessed road of faith. Therefore, my conclusion is this, and it is right and biblical: Cursed is he who does not believe, and blessed and justified he who does. Amen. Hallelujah, Amen, that I too can and may believe, and do believe. By grace I too can tell of it, I am a part of His reward, so wretched as is seldom seen, so glorious as to frighten the enemy, so godless as to make all others better, and as righteous as a pardoned child. This much that you may know in what place I dwell, in what atmosphere; it is clean and fragrant. Yes, praise God! The Lord is King, praise His name; O'er all the earth His praise proclaim. Hallelujah! Do let us also hear from you. We have experienced blessed times with Brother Kappes; more of that later. Hein and his sister send hearty greetings. Greet all; all from us and from me; the two Hueberts as well. Your brother, W. Bartel, extends greetings to you, your wife and Cornelius. H., June 2, 1854." During this time Bartel was a Bible colporteur and evangelist. 2) To Johann Claassen and Forchhammer in St. Petersburg (seven years later): "Berdiansk [where Bartel lived during the first evolutionary years of the M.B. Church as a businessman until 1864], January 8, 1861. Everything is now in the best of order in our fellowship . . . very merry and lively, . . . only the Wuerttembergers are indolent. Those of Mariupol are also alive once more . . . . Your Wilhelm." 3) To Otto Forchhammer in St. Petersburg, who had gone there from Molotschna upon the request of the brethren in November of '60 to serve Claassen as secretary for German and as adviser. He was a Dane, Bible colporteur, and, to judge from his letters, originally a well-educated man. (His German bears hardly any traces of the non-German.) He remained in St. Petersburg, or Moscow, until his old age, in fellowship with pious Protestants and Greek Orthodox Christians, in intimate association with the "Paschkovzen" from 1880-90, and with deep devotion to the spread of the Holy Scriptures in the service of the Bible Society, first the British Bible Society and then the Russian. He was an extraordinarily popular person with the old brethren, a highly gifted and passionate violinist. Converted by Kappes, he was uncommonly "happy and free," but generally naive and noble. Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld set Brother

Forchhammer, the man "beloved by all," a living memorial in his "Reports" by placing him on a par with the "pastors"; Forchhammer had apparently been a special friend of the children. Remaining close to the "Secession" only until 1862, when Claassen returned home and he was informed of the complete and wretched bankruptcy of the "Liberated" through the unsparing letters of the sobered and disillusioned W. Bartel, he gradually drew away from the movement entirely. When the author met him in Moscow in January of 1889, he spoke of that time, as of a more than half-forgotten dream, with some distaste. Only at the mention of Claassen's name did he come alive, speaking of him with love and respect. For more information see #161 below: "Documentary Supplements." According to the opinion of W. Bartel, who otherwise greatly admired him, Forchhammer's "error" or "illness" of that time (1861) was his "smearing," that is, the recognition of Christians of other denominations, especially those of the Mennonite Church. Thus W. Bartel writes to him with "loving exhortation" in Claassen's letter: ". . . Our dear Forchhammer, it seems, cannot abandon his 'smearing' [he loved to visit the 'Church'[73] of the Anglo-American Evangelical Free congregations in St. Petersburg]. Farewell, old boy! Should you remain there when Claassen returns [home to the Molotschna], I hope that, next to Christ, you will have Martin Kautz from Elizabethdorf [Colony of Mariupol] at your side; then I think, you would remain healthy—that fellow would treat this, your ailing wound of pleasing men, with saltpeter and salt . . . . W. Bartel. March 16, 1861. Berdiansk." W. Bartel writes to Johann Claassen in St. Petersburg already in somewhat more sober terms. "There must be considerable friction among the brethren [in the Molotschna] . . . with regard to the interpretation of the Word. There are those among them who demand that no worldly person is to be greeted or given the hand . . . and who impose yokes which neither they nor we can bear; . . . I make mention of this in a letter of admonition to the entire congregation, that is, in the spirit of the Scriptures . . . . Do not at all count on good days ahead . . . . The coming of the Lord is at hand . . . . Berdiansk, April 8, 1861. Wilhelm Bartel. April 24 . . . Yesterday, on Easter Sunday, we, the brothers and sisters of Berdiansk, travelled to Neu-Hoffnung where we met people from Rosenfeld and Neuhoffnungstal [all villages in the late Pastor Wuest's parish]. We had a blessed time together . . . Joseph Hottmann is once more happy in spirit . . . . W. Bartel."

b) Jakob Becker's letters. The following lines which Becker wrote to Claassen in St. Petersburg show how the exuberant movement began to degenerate in the summer of 1861 and the attitude which Jakob Becker, the assistant church leader, adopted toward the movement. (Becker, at this time, was in the position of leadership, while the real

elder or first minister, Huebert, adopted an almost passive attitude toward the movement because, generally speaking, he was not a man of energetic character and partially because he had become discouraged by his own and the severe illness of his wife, as well as partially because he had been intimidated by the "strong" and the "free".) "Rudnerweide, June 11, 1861. The peace of God be with you, dear brother! Greetings with Psalm 86:6. Strength and beauty are among His people. The Lord has done great things for us, for which we rejoice . . . . Sunday we were so lively [in Jakob Reimer's home in Gnadenfeld] that the brethren leaped and danced, while we were near the water [where Jakob Reimer, the owner of the house, was baptized].[74] Old Brother Strauss and several others could not endure it and went into the old grandfather's house . . . . On the Tuesday evening before Pentecost, Wilhelm Bartel was with us [in Rudnerweide], and we sang outside before the door, giving thanks and shouting for joy with one another. And the world shouted back at us . . . It gathered at the street fence and listened . . . . W. Bartel went out to preach the gospel to them. [Meanwhile, a deputation from the Mennonite Church is supposed to go to St. Petersburg in order to work against Claassen there] . . . . If he [the minister they sent to represent them] will say that we rejoice with much shouting and that we also dance, then he will speak the truth . . . but I suppose that you must have Scriptural grounds to justify the matter . . . . Jakob Becker."

c) Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld represents the other side. He, too, writes to Claassen on the same day: "Gnadenfeld, June 11, 1861. Today three men from the Old Colony—Unger, Epp and Loewen—visited me for two and one-half hours. [Cf. further *Geschichte der Mennoniten Brueder Gemeinde Chortitzer Bezirks* (History of the M.B. Church, District of Chortitza.)] But they are very narrow-minded and fear that the same thing will happen to us that happened to them [in the 'Kronsweide revival,' cf. *#127*], thus they warn us. . . . They have impressed me as being sincere, and it is such people that God allows to prosper . . . . (June 18). Brother, I do not wish to accuse anyone, nor am I regarded very highly any more by those who are too much disposed toward the unrestrained expression of joy because I do not retract the statement that I will no longer tolerate such bedlam in my home as took place last Sunday, May 28, in my shed. I leave it to God; He shall accomplish what I and other dear brothers and sisters cannot. I do not attend any of the large meetings because I am uneasy there and am firmly convinced that it is not the pharisee within that warns and chastises me and holds me back from such pagan conduct, but the Spirit of God . . . . Jakob Reimer."

d) Mrs. Katherina Claassen, nee Reimer, sister of the former, writes to her husband in St. Petersburg: "Liebenau, June 15, 1861 . . . . [On

Pentecost Monday, in a vacant Nogai mosque in the former Nogai village of Kakbas[75]] several leaped and danced, some played and sang, and then almost all of them shouted for joy. Occasionally someone prayed, but the rest did not become quiet; hardly anything could be understood; . . . this appears sinful to me . . . . Katherina Claassen."

e) Abram Unger of Einlage, mentioned above, who had, according to Reimer's letter, made his first visit to the Molotschna brethren, wrote to Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld after this visit: "Einlage, June 15, 1862. Dear brother in Christ! In accordance with your request, I am sending you *Wallfahrt nach Zionstal* (Pilgrimage to the Valley of Zion) and another book in which the history of the [Moravian] Brethren Church is described. You should take page 70 to heart, for these had fallen into the same emotional fanaticism as you. Dear brethren! become sober for a change! Is there not a wise person among you? Do not approach the Word of God from such a one-sided perspective! Indeed, if the Bible were to contain nothing more than to say that one could dance, then one could quite frankly not reprove you; but it is also written: Let us walk respectably, or carefully before them who are without, or: Work out your salvation with fear and trembling! and many similar passages. You yourselves know the Holy Scriptures, and if you wish to use the whole of it with prayer and supplication to God, that He might lead you into all truth, then a sober, manly and at the same time lovely and happy Christianity will result, which will be pleasing before God and man. When I think of the kind of dear souls there are among you, who love their Savior most fervently, I am obliged to weep that you are leading them into such an immoral, insipid way of life, in conflict with all orderliness. Do open your eyes for a change! Should the dear Savior Jesus Christ have achieved the kind of thing that is found among you through his indescribably severe suffering? Were you to take the entire Scriptures, you could not prove such a thing; for you would have to take it out of context, and that is not permissible. Dear brother, please do not think that I am advocating a sad and morose Christianity—not at all! On the contrary, we can be heartily happy in Christ who redeems us only and alone through His grace, quite freely; we have been made free and need bring Him nothing but our sins. His holy name be praised in all eternity that He has saved us in this and no other way. We may come to him at any time with our sins and weaknesses, and always it is said: For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. Hallelujah, honor, glory and praise be to the Lamb, who has loved and continues to love us! Let us not prepare Him any more shame through this extreme emotionalism, but neither by again returning to a dead church; no, we too want to establish an apostolic church,[76] where Jesus Christ is the cornerstone. Amen. I desire that you let all those who wish,

to read this letter . . . . Greetings from your brother in Christ, Unger."

f) Heinrich Huebert, in his letter to Claassen in St. Petersburg expresses anxious misgivings about the final outcome of this exaggerated exuberance and freedom. "Liebenau, June 18, 1861. Dearly beloved brother in Christ! Christ in us, the hope of glory. Hallelujah, Victoria! Amen. With such a blessed Word of God as this, and similar ones, one can rise above all occurrences, afflictions and difficulties which we may encounter in our life of faith; for we are more than adequately comforted by it. I simply believe that God led us out, first from our own selves that we might look upon ourselves as perfectly righteous in Christ, as the second Adam, who has been placed into the spiritual life (I Cor. 15:45); secondly, also led us out of the church . . . . Should He not, the faithful and true One, also have already ordered the rest of the paths of our pilgrimage? Surely, His plan for us was ordained long ago . . . . Dear brother! You will probably already have been accurately informed through the letters of other brethren, as well as through your wife, regarding the present circumstances of the brotherhood. Therefore I shall say nothing on the matter except to share my opinion with you. At the time when the *Kleine Gemeinde*, having recognized its unjust practice and deeds, left the church, the devil took advantage of the opportunity and led them to build upon their own works, as you yourself know. When, not so long ago, a revival later took place in the Old Colony [that of Kronsweide, 1853-1855, cf. #127], through which the freedom in Christ was made somewhat clearer to even those people, . . . they sought, . . . before they had become firmly established in this grace . . . to complete in the flesh what the Spirit had begun in them. Herein the Word of God then also remains true, that we do not wrestle with flesh and blood only, but against the prince of this world in heavenly places. But God be praised that we have a Savior who has more than conquered all and has been victorious over death, devil and hell, and has given us eternal life in Him, and has made us sit with Him in heavenly places! . . . I commend you to the love and faithfulness of our Savior! Your brother, Heinrich Huebert."

g) Johann Claassen of Liebenau writes a letter to the congregation from St. Petersburg in which we recognize his mediating, but still too lenient attitude toward the "exuberant" movement: "St. Petersburg, June 18 (20), 1861. Dear brothers and sisters in Berdiansk and Molotschna! . . . Finally, finally I have received the much-longed-for letters. We demand that our civil liberties not be denied us [through the 'ban' which hindered their civil activities]; and we have a right to do this: we are entitled to seek protection as long as our highest secular authority [the monarch] allows us to do so. [Compare the petition to His

Imperial Majesty above.] But if the authorities prove to us that we have no separate existence as secular citizens, what am I then to say? What I mean is this: Brethren, you should ask yourselves in all seriousness: Is it entirely possible that no imitation should occur in the midst of so much tumult? If one has the feeling that he could shout for joy with all his might but refrains from doing so out of consideration for one or another brother (but not because of human fear), and thus does him a service, should this always be sin? May the following verse have absolutely no application here: All things are lawful for us, but not all things are helpful? May one brother never say to another: Dear brother, if you were to shout or rejoice ten times harder than you already do—and if your voice were ten times stronger than it is,God's mercy would still be much greater, higher, deeper, longer and wider than you could ever shout it out. But since Christ, highly praised in all eternity, rather than shouting for joy, is our element, might we not, for this or that reason, perhaps acquit ourselves more quietly—should that always be considered pharisaism or sin? Of course, I can understand that brothers and sisters filled with new wine cannot leave off shouting. Nor do I demand this of them, for I myself have felt and tasted how kind the Lord is when once in a dream I felt like throwing down my cap, tearing my clothes (which the Jews did for sadness), indeed even throwing myself down before the Lord, to be consumed, wishing never to rise again for joy. But even this would fall short and never express our joy adequately. God's mercy is too exalted, too glorious, too precious than that we should be able to express it with our voice or gestures. And so, since things are the way they are, judge and be sober, and do not immediately think, if for some reason you sometimes shout less for joy, that Christ, our bridegroom, is therefore lowered one rung in heaven! That this my language will not at all please many of you, dear brethren, and you, indeed many of you, will say, Claassen has become a Pharisee, will not influence me in the least. And though you should attack Jakob Reimer, who is unfortunately sick at times, at times has trouble with the pharisee inside himself, and often finds it difficult to sacrifice his good name for the sake of Christ, and though the dear brethren are partly right,—I shall nevertheless continue on my way . . . . I have begun to eat the sour apple, and even though its bitterness should leave my teeth dull, it must now be entirely eaten up. I refer to those passages in the Word of God which do not always please us. I wish that you would discuss the matter in all calmness without having to defend your side with so much zeal.[77] After all, I, too, must manifest enough manliness in order to remain in St. Petersburg one month after another.[78] Therefore, please do me the favor of discussing, in all calmness and brotherliness before God, the extent to which you want to tolerate such noisy behavior, which our enemies use as a weapon against us . . . . I wish neither to limit your joy nor to bind your

consciences. I believe you can see from this letter that I want a free conscience. But all of the brethren desire this, those who are in favor of a noisy joy (of which I am also one when I am among you; here in St. Petersburg it does not matter) as well as those who are more inclined to favor a quiet conduct. In such cases, a brotherly compromise must be worked out in the presence of God the Father . . . . Dear brethren, let me say quite openly: adopting a predetermined position so that, when you read this letter, you throw your hands behind your back, shake your head and say: Claassen is a pharisee, and walk out of the door—that is of absolutely no use to me! I want considered answers measured by the standards of the Word of God, that I can, . . . where I am forced to give an account of myself, speak with joy and need not worm my way through . . . . That you, dear brother Wilhelm Bartel, together with many other brethren, will not allow us in the least to confront you with the question: how much can we concede to the weaker brethren (you say: stubborn—don't you?), for the sake of the Lord in which neither the glory of our Savior, which is the central issue, is lessened, nor any brother or sister suffers anything? I, too, know that no one dares to do this—for woe to him who does! But I have dared to do it in this letter, and that quite without anxiety! I want to serve you as much and as little as the Lord grants me grace; . . . but to enslave the conscience, that you do not want to nor may you do. But the other brethren demand the same right, and I demand freedom of conscience as well, for it is for that reason that I am in St. Petersburg. [Here follows a warning to the 'rationalists.' Jakob Reimer and others, whom he believes to be standing in even greater danger.] Do not allow your reason too much free play. It will surely lead you onto byways. Rather, be prepared to suffer reproach with the others. The times are changeable; there is change in the air. Perhaps there will come a time that pleases you more. But do not divide! [Here he returns to the 'noisy ones.'] The casual dismissal [of the 'rationalists'], which I infer from Brother Wilhelm [Bartel's] letter, does not appeal to me; for my work here is for them as well as for the brethren, in a word, for all the brethren who are being persecuted because of their faith . . . . For my sake and yours, I ask you once more: discuss this in a brotherly fashion and pray in the spirit of Acts 1:24. In addition, may the God of peace rule your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Your brother in Christ (and the prisoner of the Lord in St. Petersburg), Johann Claassen."

h) Wilhelm Bartel defends the rapidly-growing exuberance in a letter to Claassen and Forchhammer in St. Petersburg. Late November, 1861: "I am sending you letters [from Daniel Hoppe, Jakob Reimer, Abram Cornelssen, among others, who were on the point of despair with regard to the 'exuberant' or 'free']; but truly, brethren, I must confess

that I do not care to send them to you—they are too full of complaints. . . . These fellows [the opponents of the 'free'] have all suffered shipwreck in the faith; they are sick. I beg you, for God's sake, do not take this too much to heart . . . . Even though I may not be in agreement with everything that the noisy brethren—as you call them—teach, I nevertheless heartily agree with their faith, and I tell you, these fellows are healthy and keen . . . . Do not feed these brethren [Jakob Reimer and those who shared his opinions] with any more agreement in this matter . . . . W. Bartel." (Compare this letter to those of 1862, #117!) W. Bartel to Claassen of St. Petersburg. This letter clearly demonstrates the paradoxical, at times perverse, and at other times noble nature of his Christianity. "November 22, 1861. These letters will delight you [they report of great revivals and of threatening, severe persecutions], in as much as you live in the faith and the cry of your heart is: 'Come quickly, Lord Jesus!' You see, from Gerhard Wieler's letter, that the time is getting more and more difficult. The Lord wants to make a people of us like unto Him in all ways, even in suffering. But there is comfort in this: If we endure with Him we shall also reign with Him. Whereas this may stand in the future, it will not be preceded by days of pleasure but by days of suffering. Yet in a way they will be days of joy, since we also glory in tribulation: Therefore be of good cheer, our cause is the Lord's . . . . Christ our theme, Christ our Beginning and End, our Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, Father, Brother, Friend, indeed, everything. What do you think, is this the time to flinch? Never! O God, dear brother! [does this address refer to God?!!], how much You have given us! How comforting it is to poor sinners to have such a Savior as our Lord Jesus in fact is,—who forgives sins and trespasses and does not repent of those He calls and elects. I tell you, dear brother, and I write this with a humbled heart: I would be the most wretched of all people, I would not know in what direction to turn if God had not had pity on me, as He did in His dearly, dearly—beloved Son . . . . Dear brother, we want to live in the faith, pray in faith, also for our government, especially for our noble and much-loved Emperor [of whom we expected all help and deliverance for this earthly pilgrimage, and from whom it also came as we saw above—Petition of May 18, 1862] . . . . W. Bartel."

§116 3. In the meantime, during the spring of 1862, the false teaching of the so-called "liberated" and "strong ones," a group of five leading brethren, J.B., J.K., H.B., J.M. and B.B., was exposed in its perversion through a scandalous lapse into sin by three persons (one of these brethren and two sisters). This "doctrine of freedom," the name by which the "June Reforms" of 1865 subsequently condemned it, consisted of the following: "We are free of sin; it is dead. There is neither man nor

woman, but Christ is all and in all." The four "free" brethren now most severely attacked the fifth, their "bosom friend" (as Wilhelm Bartel so dramatically describes them), after he had fallen into sin. They would not understand or admit that they also were guilty through their overzealous teaching and their own unwise and questionable behavior based on the assertion that sin could not entice them any longer. Wilhelm Bartel, now rightly so, exposed this fact to them unsparingly. Because the sinners had shown repentance, he did not want them excommunicated, which latter action, however, the four accomplished. One of the sisters doubtlessly was repentant; she also was forgiven. The other one, judging from the written material, was not; and the fallen brother justified himself (accusing the others of complicity in the misdemeanor because of their false teaching). He did this, in our opinion, in a too bold and insufficiently repentant manner, although he had endured frightful spiritual agony and felt keenly the shame and the hurt that he, formerly an eloquent witness to the Gospel, had caused to the Lord and His work. Later he was found utterly repentant and has long since become a useful member of the church in America, though holding a modest position.

§117 4. We clearly perceive the course of this perversion in various documents and in the letters of Wilhelm Bartel, who, though more sober now, still lacked sufficient humility and self-understanding. He writes to Mrs. Claassen of Liebenau, May 7-8, 1862: ". . . That I have severed my relations with our brotherhood[79] you will already have heard . . . because they forcefully attempted to persuade me to agree with their dealings (against the three fallen ones). The two B's are very provoked and treat me (and the three) with rage and vengeance. Give this letter to your husband to read (when he returns from St. Petersburg). I beg him not to treat this matter in a one-sided way; rather, when he has heard the other brethren, that he then also listen to me . . . . I believe that once Brother Claassen will be present, the brotherhood will take on a completely different turn . . . . I John 5 and Romans 14:1. [But he utterly forgets his former 'gospel lye,' his 'saltpeter' and 'salt,' his defence of the soundness of these "young ones" half a year earlier!] According to I Cor. 13, what does it profit to have tongues of men and angels without love? . . . Christ alone is my foundation; this my foundation is eternal, and poor sinners are His heavenly kingdom . . . ." Somewhat later he writes to Otto Forchhammer in St. Petersburg. We condense this very long and bitter letter, the expression of a distracted and wounded personality, as much as possible, without indicating omissions (. . .), "Since I do not know whether or not the brethren Claassen and Gerhard Wieler are still there, and because you have been falsely informed about the condition of our brotherhood, I will share some things with you. You are familiar with its beginning, and we agree that this was of God. We

lived in glorious peace; God was with us in the power of His Gospel. But half a year after Claassen's departure [to St. Petersburg in November, 1860], some of the first members [the five mentioned above] found in the Bible that brethren and sisters should greet each other with the kiss of love. Already at that time quarreling and conflict emerged among the members in the villages [of the Molotschna]. Whoever was not joyful in the faith was not truly 'free' it was said; he 'had not been liberated'; he lived 'pharisaically' and legalistically, was still 'in the flesh and carnal,' etc. That came to my attention and I was asked by Andreas Voth and Abraham Cornelssen[80] to come and seek to straighten out the matter. I saw then that the brethren were too 'spiritual' and left Christ out of view. [And in November, 1861, he had declared them to be 'shipwrecked in the faith.'] But they would not accept admonition. I begged them with all seriousness to put away this matter. Frequently the weak [?] were so harassed that I, coming from a distance, couldn't understand the situation. All of this happened, in my opinion, in a spiritual manner [!], naturally in the spirit of self-righteousness. Some rashly presumed to have weathered all reefs. Instead of singing 'I know no weaker servant,' they sang 'I know no better servant, I do everything right for Him,' and the like. And so, instead of being poor in oneself and rich in Christ, one began to be rich in oneself and poor in the knowledge of Christ. [How aptly said!] Those who are jointly responsible for H's fall, his former bosom friends, now set upon him and crushed him in spite of all his pleadings to forgive him for Christ's sake. In spite of my intercession, they excommunicated him [as they had earlier excommunicated Hoppe when he had predicted this, that which they called 'gossiping about them with malice']. I washed my hands of this matter, and so they also excommunicated me . . . . Wilhelm Bartel." As already mentioned, all the letters of W. Bartel do indicate a sobering and a lamentation over the "corrupt brotherhood." He compares himself to Jeremiah sitting on the ruins of Jerusalem and weeping (August, 1862). But nowhere do we find an 'I' or even a 'we'; always "they have sinned." The church was cleansed, edified, and expanded. Except for Bartel and J.M., all who at that time erred as the "liberated" and "strong" (who were nevertheless so weak), have confessed their sins and errors and have become members again (although J.B. and B.B. stood alone for a while after 1865). But after 1865 none of these has exerted any permanent influence upon the further development of the M.B. Church.

§118 5. In 1862 the "doctrine of freedom" was formally condemned by the entire M.B. Church, but not yet the overly-enthusiastic movement, even though the latter had become considerably more moderate

by 1864. Compare #171, "Documentary Supplements," and the "Minutes of the Meetings of the Ohrloff Ministers." After Claassen had returned from St. Petersburg on June 1862, this matter concerning W. Bartel , and a number of members who had withdrawn from the fellowship because of it (Abraham Cornelssen[81] and others in Kakbas), was rectified as much as possible. The membership was reconciled, but soon the divisions became apparent again. (#183-B. Becker's letter, December 14-19, 1864.) The "doctrine of freedom" no longer had any defenders except for J.M. who still tried to revitalize the movement, was excommunicated for these attempts, and in the "June Reforms" of 1865 was once more specifically censured. Soon thereafter he permanently left the church.

§119 6. New confusions brought about by the overly-enthusiastic and strong ones. During the fall of 1862 the preparations for the resettlement in the Kuban, as well as the vigorous struggle for the preservation of civil and ecclesiastic rights as Mennonites, came to the fore, as set forth above under XVII. Claassen was frequently absent. In August, 1862, his journeys to the Kuban began, and he himself settled there in 1864. During this time the church leadership in the Molotschna was gradually transferred to the younger brethren, Benjamin Becker and Bernhard Penner (since Huebert had become weak, and Jakob Reimer, who with increasing sharpness had opposed the manifestations of excessive enthusiasm which were again beginning to become more and more pronounced, had been set aside and finally excommunicated by the "strong ones" in December, 1864). Gerhard Wieler had, as a rule, worked in the spirit of unity with Becker and Penner in the Old Colony Church, a church which had existed, formally, since the spring of 1862. (Wieler was a Mennonite from the Chortitza District, a student of Heinrich Franz, who, as a result of his affiliation with the brethren, had lost his teaching position in Liebenau in the Molotschna and had been forced to go to Einlage in the winter of 1861-62 [see "Documentary Supplements," #167, for more about Wieler]). The work of these brethren resulted in the worst possible confusion within the church. Claassen, too, was opposed to Reimer for a time because he considered him to be "too rational" and because Reimer (for selfish reasons, in Claassen's opinion) had not participated in the Kuban settlement. Brother Reimer, on the other hand, accused Brother Claassen of having been lenient too long toward the "excessive expressions of joy" and of frequently being too "domineering" in church matters. Later, however, they were reconciled. See "Documentary Supplements," #193.

§120 7. Spiritual Despotism. In the meantime, a frightful spiritual despotism developed in the two M.B. congregations in the Molotschna

and in the Old Colony (Chortitza-Einlage). It was led by B. Becker, Bernard Penner, and Gerhard Wieler who promoted the excessive exuberance, and by those who followed them for reasons of sympathy or fear. This conscience-frightening, even enslaving and torturing despotism had already begun during the period of the doctrine of freedom, during the "sordid" year from the fall of 1861 until the spring of 1862. The teaching consisted of merciless condemnation and mockery of every personal conviction, culminating in the feared "ban" (excommunication), in which dissidents were "delivered over to Satan."

"Because silence also speaks," even those not participating in expressions of exuberance, which developed into formal dancing accompanied by wild music and the beating of drums, were excommunicated (as happened to Jakob Reimer, Gnadenfeld). Religious books, which had earlier been treasured and which later were again accepted within the church as containing materials useful for study and devotion, even if not absolutely free of error, were burned. In the same way this dictatorship forbade members having any friendly association with people who thought otherwise. Even a hearty greeting of closest relatives was forbidden since that constituted "fellowship with the world." The same system prevailed in the M.B. Churches in the Molotschna and in the Chortitza area. Threats and letters of excommunication were also sent to the Kuban, especially to Claassen, mainly by Benjamin Becker who, like G. Wieler, had bestowed upon himself the rank of apostleship! Claassen was bitterly accused of forcing reconciliation with W. Bartel, Heinrich Bartel, Abraham Cornelssen and those like-minded upon the church, after his return from St. Petersburg. He was called a "smearer" too (as W. Bartel earlier called the brotherly recognition of those who were still in the "Babylonian Church." It is remarkable that now W. Bartel has for a considerable period of time been closely associated with Abraham Cornelssen, whom he earlier counted among the overly-rational and ship-wrecked brethren!) Finally, Heinrich Huebert was relieved of his position by the "strong ones" (after he had been falsely accused of having baptized Russians, and had been held in custody by the legal authorities during the winter of 1865, until November of the same year, for about ten months). Finally, the serious and moderate party[82] (Daniel Fast, Philip Isaak, Johann J. Fast, Jakob Jantz, Christian Schmidt, Abram Schellenberg, and others of the same mind as Heinrich Huebert and Jakob Reimer—who had since moved to Ekaterinoslav), succeeded in restoring order under Claassen's leadership. Claassen also had been accused by the local authorities of violating ecclesiastical state laws, and they demanded that the criminal court authorities put him in custody for investigation.[83] While forced to hide from the local authorities, he

worked without interruption at these church matters in the Molotschna and Chortitza regions from May 4 to July 20, 1865. The order that was restored was such as could please both God and men.

§121 8. The "June Reforms." In the minutes of June 1, 2, 12, 13, 26, and 27, 1865, read in public on August 4, 1865, in the congregation at Gnadenheim, the following points were agreed upon. (We include here the bare essentials only. The original version is included under #191, in the "Documentary Supplements"):

a) No brother in charge of a congregation may excommunicate or carry out church actions alone or with a select group of members (as was the practice with the "strong ones"). The entire church body governs itself under the leader elected by them. Obedience and double honor are due to the ministers who speak and walk according to God's Word.

b) Brother H. Huebert, who had been removed from his position, was re-instated as first elder by a process of casting lots, carried out solemnly after serious prayer and fasting (as was the case with the entire reform effort in the church).

c) The unjust and arbitrary excommunication of Jakob Reimer, Gnadenfeld, and others was revoked. All matters were submitted to calm investigation according to the law of love and order.

d) The wild expressions of joy, such as dancing, were unanimously declared as not pleasing to the Lord; the drum (actually a tambourine), was not to be used any longer since it had caused much offence. Music that had been used in an unseemly, loud, and provocative manner was to be performed in a pleasing and harmonious manner instead. The joy in the Lord should not be prohibited, but everyone was to behave in a manner that "edifies."

e) The cordial greeting and friendly treatment of non-members was declared as pleasing to God; the opposite would be regarded as the way of heathen and publicans, in the words of the Savior.

f) With praise and thanks to God it was attested that the "so-called doctrine of freedom" had not had any adherents in the church for three years and that those who had been guilty of adhering to it had repented.

NB. The Chortitza-Einlage congregation proceeded in full harmony with the Molotschna congregation in this reform. See "Documentary Supplements," #194.

§122 9. In September 1865, the essence of these resolutions was submitted in writing to the representative of the government, Privy Councillor Brun, as a confession of the church, by Brother Huebert (who

was released from prison in November) and two other brethren who had been called to the ministry, Christian Schmidt (now minister and associate-elder) in the Kuban[84] and Jakob Jantz (now, in 1910, elder in Friedensfeld).

§123 10. In the beginning of the winter of 1865 the same two brethren took a tour[85] (see #196) through all the Molotschna villages, and indeed wherever they found a welcome with ministers and Christian friends (such as ministers Franz Klassen, Ladekopp; Bernhard Harder, Halbstadt; Jakob Martens, Tiegenhagen; Elder Harder, Blumstein), they shared the current attitude of the church and its repentance in respect to earlier heresies. At the anniversary meeting of the M.B. Church on January 6, 1885, in Rueckenau, Molotschna, the above-mentioned material was read to approximately 1,000 persons in the form of a short, handwritten "History of our M.B. Church" authored by the late ministering brethren, Johann Wieler[86] and Johann J. Fast, Rueckenau.

§124 11. The M.B. Church of today, by the grace of God, has no part in these aberrations of its childhood and is free of guilt. The best record in this case are the men who since 1865 and later have stood and are standing in various church positions as spiritual shepherds and servants, like Heinrich Huebert, Christian Schmidt, Jakob Jantz, Abram Unger, Aron Lepp, Daniel Fast, Johann J. Fast, Abram Schellenberg, and their co-workers and followers during the past forty-five years. These men are known in the entire Mennonite community in Russia and America as naturally incapable of participating in such ridiculous errors. This author was baptized in the summer of 1866 and became a member of the M.B. Church in the Molotschna. He cannot recall a single instance that in any way resembles the above proceedings.

§125 12. These resolutions were also accepted in the Chortitza-Einlage and the Kuban congregations. However, the ideas of the period before 1865 caused sporadic unrest in the Kuban for a while longer because most of their extreme promoters lived there and many of the latter were not members of the church. The Einlage congregation had other difficulties to overcome before it could come to rest. These matters will be described in detail in the next chapter, which is concerned with the particular history of this congregation.

§126 13. The Molotschna Church experienced only one more minor convulsion during the winter of 1865-66, resulting from the secession from the church of some twenty members of the "free" and "stern"

movements originally under the direction of Hermann Peters, Gnadenheim, the tenacious defender of the drum[87] and of all the other old practices (except the "doctrine of freedom"). Pronouncing a "ban" on the church, they founded their own which, under Peters' leadership, is known to this day as the "Hermann Peters Church" although it has experienced almost no growth for a long time. In the late 1890s it gained a small number of intelligent and prosperous Mennonite families in the Crimea, to which place it had withdrawn, and then in 1900-1901 it moved as a group to the vicinity of Omsk in Siberia. It seems that in the most recent years a small breath of evangelical moderation and tolerance has become noticeable in it. May God grant it! We love these brethren, as we do all others insofar as their heart is sincerely directed toward Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, though they may understand us even less than we understand them. Their walk is in the fear of the Lord, as we have been told by Crimean Christians in answer to all our inquiries concerning them. It should also be noted that they do not voluntarily participate in the obligatory state forestry service in lieu of military service, as is done by all the Mennonite churches in Russia, including the M.B. churches, as not being contrary to the Gospel. Their young men allow the police to conscript them to render compulsory service at forced labor or in prison. That is the way it used to be. And now? (At the same time, however, they are the strongest opponents of the migration to America.) In other things as well, they wish to have no part in service to the state. In this respect they are as radical as the original Mennonites. In addition, one notices a one-sided, literal interpretation of the Scriptures amongst them. One typical example (although it may be different today?): they will not slice ordinary bread, but rather "break" it; hence they have been popularly labelled "bread-breakers." Although we think quite differently in these matters, we do not want to judge their conscience; let them, according to their best convictions and in faithfulness, come to terms with God and His Imperial Majesty. We remember Hermann Peters from former personal business associations, approximately forty years ago, as an intelligent, congenial and lovable man. The oft mentioned Br. Gerhard Wieler was associated with this group for a considerable length of time. He will again be frequently mentioned below in the special history of the Einlage Church of the Chortitza District and in the "Documentary Supplements." Formally he was the best-educated of the "brethren" of that time. (Besides his younger brother Johann Wieler who died in Romania in 1889, he was the only one of the original brethren who had a good command of spoken and written Russian.) In 1867 he rejoined the Krimmer Mennonite Church and now is a member of the United Brethren in Christ in North America. How this brother, talented above many, who for a while with Claassen in St. Petersburg rendered no mean service to the church, assesses that time and himself during that time, is not known to us. (Compare #191-194.)



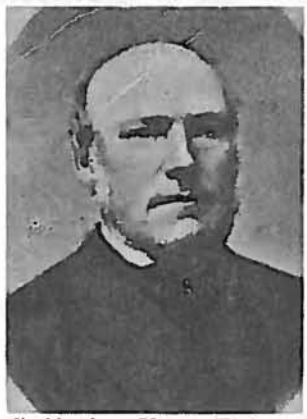
a) Johann Claassen, Liebenau-Kuban (1820-1876).



b) Heinrich Huebert, first elder of the M.B. Church (1810-1895).



c) Jakob Reimer, Felsental-Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld (1817-1891).



d) Abraham Unger, Einlage, first elder of the Einlage M.B. Church (1820-1880).



e) Philipp Isaak, Tiege (1832-1879).



f) Minister Johann Johann Wieler (1840-1890).



Temporary home of Elder Heinrich Huebert and the itinerant minister Christian Schmidt in Blumenort, Molotschna, about 1870.

XIX.
THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH IN THE CHORTITZA DISTRICT KNOWN AS THE "EINLAGE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH"

§127 1. Historical Background: Kronsweide

a) This church had a unique and independent historical development which we will present in essence according to the careful "accounts" of Brother Heinrich Epp, Andreasfeld, which he worte for the above-mentioned "History of the Mennonite Brethren Church" for January 6, 1885. We will also use letters and notes written by the brethren: Elder Abram Unger and Elder Aron Lepp. (We abbreviate freely without indicating omissions.)

b) We begin this account with an excerpt from the diary of the deceased Br. Abram Unger, formerly elder of the Einlage Church. The Mennonites, who during their origin at the time of Menno and thereafter for a period of 200 years had the honor of suffering persecution for Christ's sake, and of whom thousands will shine with their martyr's crown, have in later times, when the persecutions ceased, sunk into utter

spiritual decay. At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, several hundred of these Mennonite families settled in Southern Russia where they have lived for half a century according to their traditional Mennonite life style but without true life from God [with the exception of the brethren among the "7000" in Israel which even Elijah did not know; compare above #57: "Pastoral letters of a Chortitza Elder," etc.]. Every Sunday one of the copied sermons was read, sermons prepared earlier by ministers of whom some had been believers. However, renewals and conversions occurred so rarely that little notice was taken of them. Then it pleased the Lord, in the year 1853, to awaken from the sleep of sin, first of all one man in the village of Kronsweide, Chortitza District, and then through him several others as well.

c) Heinrich Epp relates: God, Who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, illuminated the darkness here also. A young man was awakened through the sermons of Ludwig Hofacker,[88] and came to the clear light of the Gospel on February 2, 1853. [The merit or demerit of supplying the exact dates of this and other conversions, we shall not pursue further.] The new convert began to witness of this light, and people gathered around him; often they met to read God's Word, to pray and to sing. Anywhere and at any time they talked to people about God's Word. All this was something new at that time, for everyone thought God's Word belonged only in the church. He was so full of the spirit that everyone who entered into a discussion with him was convinced by the truth. The handful of believers increased rapidly to fifty souls.

d) More from Abram Unger: The conversions were almost always "corporeal" [Unger's expression]; for example, when an individual was moved, the person began to bemoan and lament his agony of sin; some were thrown to the ground and cried out; others ran into the open fields, to wrestle with God and to cry for mercy, and so on until, after some hours or days, they found grace, forgiveness and peace. These people were full of joy and praised God and assembled as often as possible and had a fervent love for one another.

e) The incidents described by Unger are reminiscent of those in the *Kleine Gemeinde* (cf. *##36 & 58* above), except that the *Kleine Gemeinde* did not achieve joy in the faith. It is also reminiscent of the revivals with the reformed Pastor Bonekemper in the colony of Rohrbach, Odessa District, during the same period, as well as that which we recognize as unwholesome in the Wuestian revival. Similar incidents are recorded in the church history of those days in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and elsewhere. This manifestation usually occurs where the spiritual leaders who sit on Moses' throne, the appointed shepherds, let their sheep hunger and thirst or even leave them for a time. Just recently, related

phenomena were manifested in the circles of the renowned revivalist of our time, P. Johannes in Kr., who in spite of all his orthodox moderation, could not subdue many of the spirits who were attracted by his moving worship services and the effects of his prayers. (Most recently the character of this man has been called into question and doubt has been cast on his purity. We do not know to what extent these reports are true or false.) One could call the convulsions of repentance as portrayed by Klaas Reimer (*Kleine Gemeinde*), Unger and others, the manifestations of a frenzy of spiritual hunger, and the frequent subsequent manifestations of joy bordering on madness ("Exuberance" cf. ##115 & 119) in response to the forgiveness of sin and fully realized salvation, the consequence of a spiritual overfeeding following a long famine. When a parched and starving flock of sheep suddenly has too good a pasture and too abundant a water supply, it is the shepherd's chief concern not to let the flock graze and drink as much as it desires, or most of them will perish (see long "Note" to "June Reform," *#191*[2]). Believers who come from death to life in this manner readily want to make a system out of the exceptional form they experienced. A great many perversions of this type can be traced to Methodism, which has been so wholesome for the renewal of English-speaking churches and world evangelism. Its legitimate daughter is the "Salvation Army" with its eccentric ritual, about which, though we feel extremely antipathetic toward its external manner, we dare not make any negative comment, because this church fellowship has done phenomenal good and has had outstanding spiritual-moral-social success "in its area," primarily the populace of large cities.

f) Unger continues: In the colony of Einlage there were also several persons who had earlier come to assurance through the reading of Holy Scripture and now began to make contact with those from Kronsweide. "But the sly evil one already had his eye on that small flock of believers. These believed that they had the serpent already under their feet; they were completely inexperienced and did not think of temptation; some got the idea that anything that came to their mind was of God, and that God would not permit anything that would harm His children," and similar statements.

g) Heinrich Epp continues the report: Since the above-named forerunner of this revival J.L., had no one who was his equal spiritually in leading the flock, other than a one-time minister of the Kronsweide church, J.J., who had fallen into error and had therefore been deposed from his office, the latter also misled J.L., and through him led several others into the same delusion. They perverted Scripture: To the clean, everything is clean. Thus I am not doing it, but the sin which abides in me, does it—and other similar (passages), so that they believed they were doing the will of God in everything. Thus they also fell into sins of

the flesh. They were revealed and received [due] ecclesiastical and civil punishment. This "strong meat," as the misled ones called their heresy, was not made known to all believers, and many remained undefiled by that sin. "Yet the whole fellowship, the innocent along with the guilty, were steeped in the same lye and banned by the church," 1855. After several weeks they were reinstated, according to custom, and now they and the ones from Einlage were most strongly forbidden to hold "any religious meetings" outside the church [because these meetings were hated and regarded as the root of the evil. Instead, they should have been put under wise leadership, as in Brenkenhofswalde, during its time, cf. ##45-48 above: "Gnadenfeld." But the ministers lacked the insight and capability to do it.]

2. The "Brotherhood" in Einlage. §128

a) Unger writes: The Einlage brethren certainly didn't want to believe that such a state of affairs would be reached by the children of God, and defended the brethren of Kronsweide, until, unfortunately, they were forced to see the painful truth. Thus the Einlage brethren had been painfully deceived. Yet they soon met again and began to conduct prayer and mission study meetings, for which they obtained permission from the Chortitza elder on the condition that they would not "proselytize." They obtained and read mission periodicals, and amassed an annual offering of 100 rubles or more, with contributions from eight to ten families.

b) According to H. Epp and A. Unger, these beginnings took place some five years after the tragic incident in Kronsweide, i.e. 1859/60. The founders of these mission and prayer meetings were Heinrich Neufeld, Abraham Unger [compare his letter of June 15, 1861, #115 above] and Cornelius Unger. God granted an increase in the meetings. Among other items, the Einlage brethren read the *Missionsblaetter der Gemeinde getaufter Christen* (Missionary Periodical of the Church of Baptized Christians) [Hamburg Baptists]. This raised two crucial issues for Br. Unger: secession and baptism. [It is remarkable that until June, 1861, there is no trace of any connection between these brethren and those of the Molotschna.] Brother Heinrich Neufeld was not disturbed by the question of baptism, but Br. Unger wrote to Oncken [the founder of the Hamburg Baptist Church], who also answered.

c) Brother Aron Lepp, elder of the Einlage M.B. Church in Andreasfeld, wrote the following for the "History of Our M.B. Church" in 1884: My conversion took place in 1857 and 1858. I began to lead a moral life. I received the impetus from my dear friends David and Heinrich Goertz [members of the Gnadenfeld congregation, who, along with the narrator, served as supervisors of the Hebrew colonies in the

Kherson District]. Since I could cultivate no fellowship with Christian friends, I used Friedrich Starke's *Handbuch* for our personal edification and sought to improve my life according to its instruction, but did not find satisfaction therein. In 1857 I visited the brethren Peter Friesen, Johann Loewen and Cornelius Hiebert, who were already living in Chortitza at the time, and heard them tell the story of their conversion. Then I saw the light. From then on I sought knowledge and the salvation of my soul and prayed about it to God. And thus it pleased the dear Lord, through the mediation of Hofacker's sermons, to bring about a new creation in me. "O the blessed hours that Jesus provides when one remembers only the wounds of the Lamb!" It was in 1858 when the great change took place in my heart. I was overjoyed until I read the sixth chapter of Romans. There I found that I lacked something that could not be procured. I shared this with the brethren, who sought to comfort me with the baptism of the Spirit. Thus three years elapsed, until in 1861, news came from the Molotschna, stating that the brethren were baptizing.

XX.
THE INTRODUCTION OF BAPTISM BY IMMERSION IN THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH AND THE FOUNDING OF THE "EINLAGE" CONGREGATION

The matter of baptism in the M.B. Church is treated in detail only at this point, in connection with the special history of the Einlage congregation, in order to avoid massive duplication. It took a different course in various congregations, as the reports and documents available to us show.

§129 1. In the "Founding Document" of January 6, 1860, the Molotschna brethren emphasize the ancient evangelical-Anabaptist doctrine: "We confess a baptism in faith, as a seal of faith; not on a memorized faith . . . ." (Cf. #83 above.) The form of baptism is not yet mentioned. How the idea originated is shown by the reports of Johann J. Fast, Johann Wieler, Jakob Reimer, A. Unger, H. Epp and Aron Lepp. Here we immediately list the dates of the first baptisms according to a number of letters and especially from the Molotschna register of baptisms written by Elder Heinrich Huebert. The following were baptized at the Molotschna: on September 23, 1860: Jakob Becker and Heinrich Bartel (baptized each other); on October 9, Abraham Dyck and Bernhard Penner; on October 14, Isaak Koop (born 1817). By spring, 1861, the practice of baptism by immersion is in full swing. In a letter by Jakob

Reimer (Gnadenfeld) dated April 25, the question of whether one should baptize Wuerttemberg brethren from Wuest's former church is already brought up, as well as what outward form should be used. Heinrich Huebert was baptized in May, 1861, and Jakob Reimer (Gnadenfeld) was baptized by Huebert after that, on May 21 of that year, on Sunday, two weeks before Pentecost; on this Sunday, 31 persons were baptized, including only three persons (Mennonites) who had not previously received another form of baptism. In the same year, November 1861, the first Chortitza Mennonite, Gerhard Wieler, was baptized in Berdiansk by brethren from the Molotschna. By October, 1861, most of the members of the M.B. Church, which then existed only in the Molotschna District, had already been baptized. Wilhelm Bartel was baptized on October 8. But baptism by immersion was not yet mandatory. Johann Claassen was baptized only after his return from Petersburg on June 30, 1862, other fullfledged members even later. Baptism (immersion) as a condition for membership and fellowship at the Lord's table was first stressed by the Chortitza-Einlage brethren, when they declined the fellowship of the Lord's table offered to them by Br. Benjamin Becker who had begun to visit them in the winter of 1861-1862, because they wanted to be "baptized first." As we know, Abram Unger was already corresponding with Oncken in 1858-1860. Br. Jakob Becker writes to Johann Claassen in St. Petersburg regarding this question: "Rudnerweide, December 3, 1861 . . . . Benjamin says the brethren in the Old Colony [from which he returned on November 24] are always coming closer, also want to secede, but do not want to observe the Lord's Supper before they are baptized. They think we should get to the place where we will not permit (believers) to partake of the Lord's Supper before they are baptized." [This had not been thought of at the Molotschna until this time, the end of the second year of the existence of the M.B. Church. Whether one knew himself to be baptized or not was a matter of personal understanding and conscience and was left to the decision of the individual, whether he was a Mennonite baptized on his confession of faith or a Wuerttemberger, baptized as an infant and then confirmed. These repeatedly partook of communion with the seceded Mennonite Brethren.]

§130 2. As far as the manner of baptism (immersion) is concerned, the 1861 correspondence of Br. Jakob Becker and Jakob Reimer with the late Br. Alf, the senior minister of the German Baptists in Russia, indicates considerable variation. Immersing the kneeling candidate forward, or the standing one backward: both modes were practiced. Then it was decided to use the latter because the former was more difficult to perform, the latter more appropriately representing the imagery of being-buried-with-Christ. This question certainly seems unimportant to the

author (although he practices this mode of baptism), because there is no clear biblical passage to support it. All else that is inveighed in this regard is nothing but the "tradition of the elders." Millions of people have, according to the custom of their people, been "seated" into the grave, etc. etc.

§131 3. The origin of the understanding of immersion and the actual beginning of its use.

a) In the "History of Our M.B. Church" Johann Wieler and Johann J. Fast write: "One traditional erroneous idea after another was discovered, and thus the brethren also came upon the doctrine of baptism and its utilization. They realized that baptism was not handled correctly in the church for two reasons. First of all, it was administered to the unconverted [that is, only in most cases. Among the first members of the Mennonite Brethren Church there were not a few who, according to their own testimony, were baptized on confession of a living faith]. Secondly, the form which was practiced could not be called a baptism because it was performed through pouring. As a result, the brethren and sisters admitted that none of them had received holy baptism in its original meaning and form, and that it was therefore necessary to carry it out. Therefore this act was performed according to God's Word, in that one brother first baptized the other, and then continued in this manner." [Although this did not proceed as smoothly as it would appear from the authors of the "History".]

b) Jakob Reimer (Gnadenfeld) writes thus in 1884: 1) "As early as 1860, the biblical baptism became clear to the seceding brethren." It had already become clear to Reimer in 1837, when he was an 18-year-old youth, through the reading of the biography of Anne Judson. Even before his baptism by pouring in the church, he felt the urge to be baptized by immersion. Pointing out the section about baptism in the biography, he asked his father whether there were still people who baptized by this mode. His father answered in the affirmative, but suggested he would have to travel to Prussia to meet them. In 1835 he had become acquainted with people there who had been baptized in this way [for Baptists had lived in Germany since 1834]. At that time a journey to Prussia was still very cumbersome, however. 2) What the deceased thought of the spiritual significance of baptism, as a 25-year-old young man, and what the teaching of the Gnadenfeld Church, to which he belonged at that time, was, is evident from a letter he wrote to his sister, later Mrs. Claassen of Liebenau. "To Katharina Reimer of Felsental . . . . Dear sister: Do not think: how can Jesus be in me and I in Him, as Paul says in Gal. 3:27, for as many of you as are baptized, have put on Christ, and I am not yet baptized. No, just as the Galatians

had put on Christ before baptism and received baptism as a seal thereof, Paul says: As many of you as are baptized . . . . Believe assuredly that now many are being baptized of whom Paul would never say: As many . . . . But you, dear sister . . . put on Christ before you are baptized, and then, the Lord willing, be baptized as a seal of your faith and as a sign that you have put on Christ and now want to live for Him . . . . Yes, let this time, especially when you go for instruction, not be lost to you; for it is like Christmas, the best time in your whole life. . . . This blessed time never returns, for it is really a blessed time when, from the mouth of a true teacher,[89] one hears words of the Savior that refresh the soul . . . . At that time, as well as at home, utter a prayer to the Lord, that He may cleanse your heart. Spend much time alone, kneel before Him who blots out sins and confess how closely sin clings to you, that He may wash you in the blood He shed for us. And then if your sin be red as scarlet, you will become clean as white wool . . . . Your loving brother, Jacob Reimer. Gnadenfeld, December 20, 1844." 3) Around 1860 Reimer received the *Friedensglocke*, published by Philipp Paulus, in which proof was given from the Word of God that everyone had to see to his own salvation and could not leave it to another. During this time he also received a tract, published by the Evangelical Free Church in St. Gallen, Switzerland, from his friend, Goertzen in Mariental [Molotschna], in which the practice of baptism was also described as it is now being practiced in the M.B. Church. Similarly, the "church brother" Abram Matthies of Rudnerweide presented him with a tract published by the Baptists, with the vexing words: "You will probably be able to use it." He accepted it with thanks. From this time on, there was much discussion about it and there were "difficult scenes" among the brethren, a number of whom later withdrew as a result of baptism [but only after 1862, when it was gradually made mandatory]. 4) "Since most of them did approve of building the church according to the Word of God," one should also begin to baptize. Only they did not quite know how to begin, because none of the brethren had been baptized in this manner, and thus the matter was delayed. On one occasion, "all those in Waldheim were together with the full blessing of the Lord," and there, too, baptism was again discussed. Several young brethren, on the homeward journey from this meeting in Waldheim, came to the Kuruschan creek [halfway between Waldheim and Gnadenfeld, which are about 10 versts apart], and two said to each other: "Here is water" . . . And so they opened the Word of God, for almost everyone carried a Testament and *Glaubensstimme* hymnal with him, and after reading, singing and praying, they baptized one another on their faith by immersion, during a night of bright moonlight [on September 23, 1860]. The two were the brethren named previously: Jakob Becker (elected to the ministry at the same time as Heinrich Huebert, on May 30, 1860) and Heinrich

Bartel (ordained along with Abram Peters of Gnadenheim and Franz Klassen of Elizabethtal as the first deacons by Heinrich Huebert in the winter of 1860/61).

c) Only in the winter of 1860/1861 did they correspond with the Baptist minister, Alf, in Poland, and simultaneously with the Mennonite brother, Peter Ewert who also lived there. The latter and another Mennonite baptized each other in 1861, after receiving an account of the secession and baptism at the Molotschna, in a letter from the Molotschna brethren. This letter was read in a large assembly of Mennonites, Lutherans and Baptists, followed by an election of ministers and baptism. "They did not want to begin anything before we had written" (Jakob Becker's letter to Claassen, December 3, 1861), although Alf's church was already in existence nearby, organized on the basis of the German Hamburg confession. This correspondence shows that the questions of military service and footwashing prevented complete unity between the Mennonite Brethren and the Baptists. We present the following items from that correspondence: 1) Jakob Becker to Johann Claassen in St. Petersburg. Rudnerweide, April 16, 1861. ". . . We received word [from Poland] . . . that some have been baptized by the Baptist Minister Alf [even before Ewert] and still remain Mennonites . . . . On Christmas eve (1860), Reimer and I sent letters. . . . The Baptist Minister Alf requests that we write him what we think of military service and . . . footwashing. The Mennonites write that they are not entirely in agreement with the Baptists, and Alf writes the same. They agree only on baptism and the Lord's Supper and partake thereof together." 2) Alf to the Brethren: "Adanov, June 21, 1861 . . . . I regard it as profitable to send you a copy of our confession of faith. Thereby you can test our faith according to the Scriptures. I would like to see us all have one understanding of the teaching of Christ. On many points we cannot quite come to an agreement with the Mennonite Brethren. I myself hold a number of things against them, which do not seem quite right to me. First of all, what I dislike most, is that they have adopted a particular form of baptism. We lay the candidate on his back so that he is buried in and by water; that is how all churches of Baptists in Germany, England and America baptize.[90] The Mennonite Brethren, in their own way, let the baptismal candidate kneel in the water and let him sit there for a while, then lay him forward on his face in the water . . . . It also seems wrong to me that brethren baptize each other alone, when there are Baptists who could have baptized them . . . . [A small number of Mennonites had already been baptized by Alf, but most of them had been baptized by Ewert. Twenty-two the first time. Later this good Brother Ewert and a number of Mennonites who had already been immersed, were baptized once more, backward, "baptist" style! Long since, however, there is an M.B. Church of born Mennonites

existing in Russian-Poland, independent and alongside the Baptists.] . . . The Mennonite Brethren are also attacking our group sharply: some say that if we do not accept everything as they do, we are contrary Christians and will be lost. No one shall enter the military, rather, he should give up his life but not take up arms . . . . The third item is footwashing [with which he takes sharp issue] . . . . Your brother, C.F. Alf." 3) Peter Ewert to the Brethren: "Kicin, September 5, 1861 . . . . We are now ridiculed and hated by everyone, also by some Baptist brethren who judge us to be people in error . . . because we do not recognize the sword of revenge and again, because we confess footwashing after the Lord's Supper . . . . Our baptism is also incorrect . . . . Your co-pilgrim Peter Ewert."

d) Accordingly, the Molotschna M.B. Church achieved its understanding and practice of baptism, as it is now used, independently, without personal contact with the Baptists, or exchange of letters, but influenced by their writings.

4. The development of the question of baptism in the Einlage M.B. Church can be seen from the following: §132

a) Brother Benjamin Becker, "itinerant minister," writes: "Alexandrovsk [near Einlage], November 24, 1861 . . . . Today I came from Einlage with Br. Johann Loewen. I was there for a day and a night, with the brethren . . . . Some brethren wish to join us, so that they will not be a fellowship unto themselves, but will be in one group with us. Abram Unger has written to Hamburg for a minister who is to come and baptize them. It appears that in spring a Baptist minister will come. But they are not all agreed on this . . . . Benjamin."

b) Brother Heinrich Epp relates: At the Molotschna, a school teacher, Gerhard Wieler [in Liebenau] became a believer. Since W. belonged to the Chortitza District, he was exiled there and sent here. Br. Abram Unger took him into his home toward the end of 1861. Because Br. Wieler was talented and educated he urged Br. Unger to cancel the call to the brethren who were to come from Hamburg, which Unger did after resisting for some time. Br. Oncken wrote that he had nothing to lose, but that the brethren would discover that it was not easy to establish a church.

c) [Epp relates that] several brethren had gone to the Molotschna [summer, 1861: see Unger's letter #115, c, above] to attend a baptism and speak with the brethren. Here one heard quite a bit about how things were going with the Brethren. Baptism was performed according to the Word of God, but there was no order [and a "childish" manner of expressing their joy was repulsive. Cf. #115]. Yet the baptism was correct, and Gerhard Wieler, who was with us and had proclaimed

himself as leader, as well as Benjamin Becker, urged that we unite with the brethren at the Molotschna. Ten months later [according to Epp and others], the brethren Abram Unger, Heinrich Neufeld and a third brother again went to the Molotschna and were baptized there by Gerhard Wieler. This took place on Sunday, March 4, 1862, in Liebenau in the Tokmak Creek according to letters from Benjamin Becker, G. Wieler and Mrs. Claassen (Liebenau), written during those days. On the following Sundays, March 11 and 18, the first baptisms ensued at Einlage, in the Dnieper River, with 18 persons, both men and women on the first occasion, and 17 persons on the second. Thus writes Br. Jakob Janzen from Sergeievka, whose dates seem to be the most accurate and correspond with those of the Molotschna letters. Further baptisms followed in rapid succession.

d) Elder Aron Lepp tells of his baptism: In my opinion, the movement that occurred at the Molotschna [the "exuberant" movement] was not in accordance with the Gospel. At that time I advised the brethren to wait until we could see what the outcome of the matter there would be. Yet in the spring of 1862 Br. Abram Unger, Heinrich Neufeld and another brother went there and were baptized. I and my dear wife, who had also accepted the Savior during that time, traveled to the colony to be baptized. We were driven out of the baptismal waters with sticks. But another spot was chosen where the sacred ceremony was then performed for us and several others, on April 22, 1862. As a result of this, Br. Lepp was accused of being an "Anabaptist," indicted by the Supervisory Commission at Odessa, and relieved of his position as civil and agricultural administrator of the Hebrew colonies.

§133 5. Thus the date of the organization of the Chortitza-Einlage M.B. Church is March 11, 1862, and here the date of organization of the church coincides with the date of the first baptism at that location.[91] The Einlage Church made the M.B. Church a strictly Anabaptist church, with mandatory baptism by immersion and closed communion, as a result of the influence of the late Abram Unger, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the father of German Baptists, Johann Gerhard Oncken in Hamburg.

§134 6. In the Molotschna, as late as September 29, 1863, an eighty-year-old man, Regier, who had not been immersed, received communion, according to the diary of Jakob Reimer (Gnadenfeld). This occurred in Rudnerweide where Reimer officiated at the Lord's Supper that day. In the Molotschna, communion was at first completely independent of baptism (see 1 above). Benjamin and Jakob Becker, as well as Gerhard Wieler, represented the stricter Einlage view,

particularly that of A. Unger, from whom they otherwise differed completely, and zealously advocated it in the Molotschna where it also gradually became established.

§135 7. Br. Jakob Reimer, Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld, states the reasons for obligatory immersion, quite in accord with the consensus of the great majority, as follows: From now on four brethren [of those eighteen who had signed the document of January 6, 1860, including August Strauss], together with several others, withdrew from the group completely. This prompted us to regard as our members only those who had previously shared their conversion and their faith in the Lord Jesus before the whole congregation. Earlier it sometimes happened that when someone was to be admonished, he would reply, "What proof do you have that I belong to you?" The author is convinced that this rationale is not valid. Membership is precisely defined even with non-baptizing or freely-baptizing fellowships such as the Methodists, Plymouth Brethren, and others. Holy baptism was not ordained as an instrument of coercion in church politics; rather, it is the sacred symbol of a free and joyful covenant of love between the Christian and God, between the Christian and the whole church of God, not merely the particular corporation included in one church register. It is a visible representation and seal of having died, having been buried and resurrected with Christ. In concept and purpose baptism corresponds to the new birth and sealing of the Spirit and it is best when acceptance of the faith, public confession, and baptism follow one another immediately.

§136 8. The question of the right form of baptism. We want to answer this question dispassionately and impartially by quoting outside opinions.

a) Luther and Calvin declare succinctly and categorically that the idea of "baptizo" (Greek) and "mersio" (Latin) is "to immerse completely under water," and the German word "taufen" is according to Luther identical with "deep",[92] "immersion"; and the "old church," according to Calvin, practiced immersion (see *Confession of Faith of . . . the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia, 1900-1902*). In any lexicon, encyclopedia, or Bible dictionary one finds the same explanation. According to the *Calwer Kirchenlexicon*, II, 804, "Luther at first would have preferred to re-instate immersion [in child baptism] but it could not be done anymore, and he did not want to make a doctrinal issue of it."

b) We cite some further quotations from the strictly denominational Lutheran *Kirchliches Handlexikon* by Dr. C. Meusel, Leipzig, Justus Naumann, Volume I, page 283: "Baptisterium, baptistry building. In the primitive church up to the beginning of the third century, baptism as a

rule was carried out in the open at locations safe from disturbances or onlookers, either in rivers by total immersion, or at springs, whereby the candidate stood in the water at the depth of the spring and the baptizer poured water over him. Gradually it became customary to use the thermal springs, in the homes of believers, for baptism. These cisterns were called "baptisterien" by the Greeks, and "piscinae" by the Romans [from piscis, fish], because they permitted swimming. From these antique bathing establishments the early church baptistries received their form, after the fourth century. [A baptistry such as this has been unearthed at the Kherson Monastery near Sevastopol and provided with an explanatory inscription. The basin is quite deep enough for immersion.] After the sixth and seventh centuries the baptistry was transferred to a side-chapel of the church itself. When later, however, baptism was commonly practiced merely by sprinkling, it was deemed sufficient to have only baptismal stones in the church itself . . . . Of the old baptistries, particularly noteworthy are those in Parma, Pisa, Ravenna, and Florence. In the Greek and Russian churches the custom of immersion has been maintained together with the baptistry . . . ." Volume VI, p. 577: "The actual form of baptism in oldest times was to immerse three times, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Temporarily the Spanish church limited itself to one immersion in order to express its opposition to Arianism. Thus, although immersion was the rule, pouring and sprinkling must also have been permissible very early." Volume IV, p. 96: "The baptism of the infirm, *baptismus clinicorum:* in the oldest churches the baptism of sick persons, who were in danger of death, was carried out not by immersion but by sprinkling and pouring. For this reason disagreement about its validity existed, and usually those who recuperated were barred from the clergy [clerical offices]."

c) H. Zeller: *Biblisches Woerterbuch* (Bible Dictionary), Karlsruhe und Leipzig, 1885, II, 473. "He calls it a bath [i.e. Paul on baptism] because it is known that in the warm regions of the Orient, baptism was originally carried out by immersion in running water." [Compare also F. Oehninger's *Leben Jesu* (Life of Jesus), the baptism of Jesus by John.]

d) The Council of Trent of the Roman Church (since 1545) found it necessary to prescribe, under threat of excommunication, that baptism by sprinkling was just as valid as baptism by immersion. Queen Elizabeth of England was born in 1558 and was baptized by immersion (as an infant) according to the court records still extant. The church regulations of the English Reformation, as a rule, all mention immersion as the form of baptism. (Ramseyer and *Calwer Kirchenlexikon, II,* 805.) Also Bugenhagen (died 1558).

e) The first group of Anabaptists in Zurich baptized (each other)

by pouring in 1525. But Wolfgang Schorant Ulliman, pastor in St. Gallen, rejected the pouring mode and had Conrad Grebel, who himself was baptized by pouring, baptize him by total immersion in the Rhine River. Within a short time he had baptized some 800 persons "at the river" (the Sitter) near St. Gallen. One has to assume that he baptized by immersion,[93] since he himself had requested immersion, and he would not have had to go "to the river" for pouring, since as pastor, the church was fully at his disposal at the time (Ramseyer).

f) Most of the Anabaptists of Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, who later were called "Mennonites," seem to have practiced baptism by pouring. Thus, the *Martyrs' Mirror* says that on one occasion a given number of persons were baptized from one pail of water at night. Most congregations left the form of baptism to the choice of the candidates. The majority of them requested baptism by pouring (Ramseyer).

g) The very large Anabaptist church in Augsburg (Hans Denk!) practiced immersion in the period of 1525 to 1530 (according to Professor C.H. Wedel, Bethel College, North America).

h) The writings of Menno Simons, in the German version that we possess, are not at all clear concerning the form of baptism. While his treatment of baptism is entitled "*Von der Christlichen Taufe in dem Wasser*" (Concerning Christian Baptism in Water), he also uses the expression "a handful of water." As far as is historically known to date, Menno apparently did not practice immersion, and moreover, like most Anabaptists of his time, was quite neutral, perhaps indifferent, in regard to this question, rigorous though he was in demanding a living faith before baptism.

i) There always were immersionists among the Mennonites or Anabaptists, probably until 1750 or later. Jakob Denner, the great Dompelaar minister died only in 1746. The Old Flemish party or Ukowallians (see above #166 and below, point i), the "strictest followers of Menno" (Ramseyer, according to Blaupot ten Cate), practiced immersion primarily about 1650, along with pouring. In the year 1790 in Leeuwarden, Friesland, contrary to the wishes of many members, the basin for the immersion form of baptism was removed from the church of the Frisian Mennonites by the elder with the aid of the government.

i[1]) Blaupot ten Cate, one of the best informed and impartial Mennonite historians, writes in *Geschiedenis der Doopsgezinden in Friesland,* p. 162, concerning the group of Old Flemish: "1) They had the same confession of faith as Menno and Dirk Philips concerning the incarnation of Christ (see #5h). 2) They re-baptized everyone who joined their church, even those who had already been baptized on confession of

their faith. As a rule this was done by immersion. 3.) They were very firm about using the 'ban,' especially in cases of mixed marriages. 4) They were distinguishable by great simplicity of dress and external things; herein they were similar to the Old Frisians. 5) Ordination of elders and ministers was performed by laying on of hands; the whole congregation had to recognize this ordination, and the candidate was obligated to accept this service unless he was notoriously incapable of doing so. 6) They practiced footwashing before communion. [According to some other sources, many churches practiced it only on fellow believers from a distance visiting in their homes.] Several of these principles were dropped during the course of the century . . . . Immersion was no longer practiced in Norden in 1710." This same historian reports that they considered their own Mennonite Church as the only church of Christ, and that the church was correct in not recognizing anyone outside their pale as a brother in Christ. Only elders and ministers were allowed to speak at meetings [1689]. The elders alone [not the ordinary ministers] were permitted to administer baptism and communion.

j) In the Surhuisterveen Mennonite Church in Friesland (still in existence), according to Ramseyer, the historian Blaupot ten Cate was shown an open spot in the forest where Swiss Mennonites who had fled to Holland performed baptism by immersion about 1720.

k) Between 1600 and 1800 there existed in Holland and Northwest Germany, according to Meusel's *Kirchliches Handlexicon* I, 129, the Rhynsburger[94] "Brethren" or "Collegiants" (congregationalists) who continued in Menno's teachings; they were also called "Tunkers," i.e. "Dompelaars" (compare above #9c and 13n). They practiced baptism only by immersion; however, depending on the understanding of those concerned, they also accepted members into their fellowship without baptism on faith. Frequently their baptisms (according to Blaupot ten Cate in Ramseyer, p. 410) were carried out by Mennonite ministers (from whom they very likely had received the first baptism: from whom else?). Thus the well-known Utrecht professor, Van Geuns, and also Adrian Houttuyn of Hoorn used to baptize in Rhynsburg. Tersteegen fellowshipped with them also: it was an Alliance Church as we call it today.

k) We cannot help but point out here what we have already said above (#9c and 13n) that the English Baptists branched off from the Anabaptists of the Netherlands, and this in two lines. The first line: John Smyth (died 1611), formerly a priest in the Anglican Church, went to Holland because of persecution and joined the Mennonites in Amsterdam. He baptized Thomas Helwyth (-ysse, -ys). The latter formed an English Baptist church in Amsterdam which returned to London in

1611 and published a confession of faith. Contrary to Smyth and to the Mennonites, they declared military service and the oath as permissible for the Christian. The controversial question whether J. Smyth "baptized himself" (which is hardly thinkable as "he had joined the Mennonites"), or whether "he was baptized by the Mennonites" (the most natural thing to do), and whether he baptized Thomas Helwyth by pouring or immersion remains undecided to this day. But before long this church baptized exclusively by immersion. This is the mother church of the English General Baptists, that is, of the anti-Calvinist Baptists. The second line: "The honor of having started the first organized Independent Church[95] in England belongs to the Minister Henry Jakob who, in 1616, returned to London from Holland where he had fled for a while because of persecution." From this strongly Calvinistic Independent Church (believing in predestination) a group of brethren and sisters separated and were released in love and peace in 1633 because they believed that baptism by immersion was the only biblical form of baptism upon faith. However, the newly-constituted church did not know of any "pure" church in England, i.e. pure in Calvinistic doctrine, that practiced this form of baptism. Its first minister was John Spillsbury. So Richard Blount (Blunt) was sent to Holland. He was received in a friendly manner in Rhynsburg and was baptized by Jan Batte. That was in 1640. (It should be noted that the Rhynsburgers were certainly not strongly Calvinistic! N.B. In Rhynsburg baptism was performed by laying the hands on the candidate's head as he knelt in the water with arms crossed over his chest, and by slowly immersing him three times while the sacramental words were spoken. Ramseyer, p. 408.) In London, Richard Blount first of all baptized the Minister Samuel Blacklock; later fifty-three persons were baptized, including John Spillsbury. This is the parent church of the Particular Baptists, i.e., the strictly Calvinistic Baptists. The larger parts of these two denominations in England have long ago united in the extremely tolerant Baptist Union. Therefore the "Organized Independent Church," as well as the baptism in faith in England, came from Holland. At that time the only organized independent churches in the world consisted exclusively of Mennonites, the largest number being in Holland. Immersion-baptism upon faith was practiced by many Mennonites; in Rhynsburg baptism was performed only by immersion; many Mennonite ministers baptized there. This can be deduced clearly from the following sources: J.M. Cramp, Th.D., *Geschichte der Baptisten* (History of the Baptists), Hamburg, Oncken, 1878, pp. 324-328; Professor Henry C. Vedder, *Kurze Geschichte der Baptisten* (Short History of the Baptists), Hamburg, Oncken, 1896, pp. 75-79; C.A. Ramseyer, *Histoire des Baptistes* (History of the Baptists), editor Eduard Revel, pastor, Neuchatel, 1897, pp. 406-417; Professor A. Rauschenbusch, *Kindertaufe und Biblische Taufe* (Infant Baptism and

Biblical Baptism), Hamburg, Oncken,[96] 1898, pp. 111-114. Prof. Rauschenbusch would not acknowledge that the Mennonites or the early continental Anabaptists had at any time practiced immersion. He did not know of Ullimann (Uolimann) in St. Gallen, of the immersionist church in Augsburg, the Old Flemish, the Swiss Mennonites who in 1720 baptized by immersion in Surhuisterveen in open water, nor that Mennonite ministers administered baptism in Rhynsburg. Similarly, Professor Lehmann in his book, *Geschichte der deutschen Baptisten* (History of the German Baptists), is completely in error when he maintains that the M.B. Church must be Baptist because it immerses. According to the above genealogy of the English Baptists, one could sooner say that they were Mennonites in a new form, than that the Mennonite Brethren were Baptist, because the M.B. Church essentially maintained the chief doctrines of the Anabaptists of Swiss-Netherland origin: non-resistance, refusal to take the oath (in the form of swearing), etc., and retained their church constitution, and baptism by immersion, since, although not generally Mennonite, it nevertheless was not foreign to Mennonitism.

1) At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a great revival began in the Rhineland, brought about partly through evangelical Pietists, and partly through persecuted Swiss Mennonite refugees. "The Mennonite church in Krefeld became a beacon of light for the entire region." Many accepted baptism by immersion. Gosen Gogen, a Mennonite minister in Krefeld, was baptized in the Rhine in 1724, and a large number followed him (Ramseyer, p.398 and 413).

m) B.C. Roosen, preacher emeritus of the Hamburg-Altona Mennonite Church, who died recently at a very advanced age, reports in *Geschichte der Mennoniten Gemeinde zu Hamburg-Altona* (History of the Mennonite Church of Hamburg-Altona), Part I, pages 40ff., concerning a lively Baptist movement in his church:

"The first violent conflict which emerged in our church and which shook it deeply was the *Dompelaar dispute* [quarrel about baptism]. In 1648 [eighty-nine years after Menno's death] seventeen church members extended the demand that the mode of baptism be immersion, that footwashing precede the celebration of communion, and that communion be commemorated at night with unleavened bread. Whether they wished to see this innovation apply to the entire church or just to themselves, is not clear. According to G. Roosen, Minister Beerens of Luebeck was the initiator of these innovations and Minister Jan Borchers their chief promoter. Yet innovations they were, because our congregation stood in intimate relationship with that of Fresenburg where Menno himself lived and taught, and thus it had much the same mode of worship as the former. If Menno himself had baptized by immersion, at least towards

the end of his ministry, the *Dompelaars* here would certainly have appealed to his example. How the members of our church first arrived at the notion of these demands remains uncertain. Bolten suggests a four-fold possibility in this regard, namely: they could have come from the Collegiants in Holland; or Abraham de Voss, who lived in Colchester [England], and was baptized by the Baptists, could have provided the impetus; or the writings on the history of baptism (1646-1647) by Mehring from Holstein could have been the cause; or these views could perhaps have been conveyed from Polish Prussia [thus from the homeland of our Mennonite fathers]. Soon the controversies took on a very irritable character in which the members who held on to the old traditions seem to have acted very harshly. One of the most energetic and zealous opponents of the innovators was Gerhard Roosen, a deacon since February, 1649. At one point this dispute reached the stage where the Danish military had to intervene. [Altona, where the Hamburg-Altona Church was and still is located, at that time belonged to Denmark.] In their polemical writings the *Dompelaars* also accused their opponents of having forcibly evicted them from the common church building, toward the purchase of which they had themselves earlier contributed. Around 1656 the division of the two quarreling parties into two entirely separate churches is supposed to have taken place [despite efforts towards reconciliation by the Amsterdam and other Dutch Mennonite pastors]. That this dispute was a very painful one may be inferred not only from the bitterness with which it was carried on, but also from the circumstances that it (the dispute) partially affected certain families of the church deeply. The well-known *Dompelaar* Minister Jakob Denner,[97] originally a dyer in blue, worked very effectively here and in other places from 1684 [as an 18-year-old adolescent] until his death at the age of 80, on February 17, 1746 . . . . In Barmbeck, not far from Wandsbeck, a pond was rented in which at least the first members of the church were baptized . . . . In 1666 the Flemish Church [the large Hamburg-Altona Church] declared itself willing to be reconciled if (1) the [Dompelaars] would declare baptism as performed by the elders of the Flemish a Christian baptism, (2) those baptized by the Flemish, but afterwards rebaptized by immersion, would admit that they had been too zealous in their arguments regarding the external mode of baptism and that henceforth they would not act in such a manner, and, finally, also ask that they might be forgiven with regard to those things in which they had offended others; and that (3) they would declare the teachings and practices of the Flemish Church to be in accordance with the will of God and that henceforth they would relate peaceably towards it. However, this attempt [at reconciliation] miscarried, as might have been expected . . . . It should be mentioned, briefly, that the *Dompelaars*, on the fifth of November, 1670, were granted the right to

worship according to their convictions by King Christian V [of Denmark]. Meanwhile the church now gradually began to dissolve, the more so since after 1673, due to the lack of ministers, separatists were often employed to fill this position . . . . The *Dompelaars* received one of their own, and an outstanding minister at that, in the person of the above-mentioned Jakob Denner [1684-1746].[98] In 1708 a separate church was built for him . . . . The latter was often visited by nobility [even by a princess]. By that time the hostility of the Flemish toward the rest of the *Dompelaar* Church had already ceased and so Denner preached in the Flemish Church on a number of occasions. Indeed, he would have been elected pastor of the latter church, something Gerhard Roosen [minister, formerly deacon among the Flemish, at first an incredibly bitter opponent of the *Dompelaars*] urgently desired, had Denner been willing to put aside his deviant practices."

Thus far Pastor Roosen. We see that even under the Mennonite sun there is little that is new! The wonderment, as to how the idea of immersion came to the *Dompelaars* of 1648 seems strange to us. What about the Baptists among the Old Flemish of the day? Wherein lies the reason for the dissolution of this congregation when it had such an eminent and convinced minister as Denner, such a large church, such a large audience and such a royal privilege? Was it the influence of "separatist ministers" who held different views on baptism and the Lord's Supper, or the influence of the Quakers who discarded baptism and communion altogether, of whom P. Roosen writes elsewhere that they disquieted the Mennonites very much at the time?

n) In the *Glaubenslehre der Mennoniten oder Taufgesinnten* (Doctrinal Teachings of the Mennonites or Anabaptists) by Cornelis Ris, minister of the Mennonite congregation at Hoorn (Holland), approved in 1773 by the Mennonite congregation "Zur Sonne" [the Sunites] in Amsterdam and the rest of the congregations associated with it,[99] we read in article 25: ". . . As far as holy baptism is concerned, we understand it to mean a dipping or submerging of the whole body in water (Rom. 6:4; Matt. 3:16; Acts 8:37, 38), or a generous sprinkling with the same (the latter mode we consider more appropriate in these northern regions since the same benefits are signified thereby) and this in the most solemn manner in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost . . . ." [In respect to sprinkling, quotations are lacking.]

o) We see that the M.B. Church still remains within the Mennonite family with regard to its practice of immersion. For an evangelical Anabaptist fellowship, the introduction of scriptural apostolic teachings and practices is never an innovation,[100] but, having received the necessary insight, it becomes a sacred duty to discard old errors and that which is broken and buried, to search out again that which is primeval

and to reestablish it according to the pattern of the original. This was always Menno's sacred and unshakable principle as well as his practice within the bounds of his own understanding. If he erred in respect to the mode of baptism, we are duty-bound, according to God's will and Menno's own teachings, to correct his error. "One is your Master, even Christ!" This was the spirit of Menno and in this matter we happily concur with him.

p) If next we ask concerning the symbolic meaning of the mode of baptism according to Holy Writ, we find that baptism is represented primarily as a bath of cleansing (or a washing off) and renewal, a burial and resurrection with Christ. Immersion is surely the most appropriate figure for a "bath" and applies equally as well to the concept of a complete washing, although pouring can also symbolize such a washing. Likewise, immersion symbolizes burial and resurrection with Christ (and that more fully than pouring): stepping down into the water corresponds to dying; the submersion, to burial; the arising from the water, to the rising from the dead; the stepping forth and out, to walking according to a new life. Compare Romans 6 and parallel passages: Matt. 3:16, Acts 8:39. Heinrich Zeller remarks in his already-cited *Biblisches Woerterbuch* (Bible Dictionary), Volume II, p. 474: "Immersion in a stream means that the old Adam in us is to be drowned daily through repentance and penance; he who lives eternally before God in righteousness and purity, is to die with all of his sin and evil desire, yet daily to arise and come out as a new man." (Zeller has taken this quotation from Luther's Catechism.)

q) *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.* This highly interesting document was found by the Greek Metropolitan-Bishop Bryennios of Nikomedia (since 1877) in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery in Constantinople (it was copied in 1056 AD by a certain Leontios), printed by Bryennios in 1883, and made known throughout the academic world by Professor Harnack. From its pages we relate the following according to Meusel's *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, Otto Zoeckler's *Handbuch der Theologischen Wissenschaften* (Muenchen, 1890), J.J. Herzog's *Compendium of Church History* (Erlangen, 1890), and the *Calwer Kirchliches Lexikon. The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*[101] (the abbreviated Greek title is *Didache ton Dodeka Apostolon*) is approximately as long as the Epistle to the Galatians. According to the research of Bryennios and other notable scholars, it was probably written in the years between 130 and 150 AD, thus not very long after the death of the last apostle, John (d. circa 100 AD). The most extreme positions of certain scholars who favor an early date place it around 50 AD; those favoring a late date, around 200 AD. Bryennios' date is likely the correct one, therefore. Content: How the catechumens, that is, those who were being instructed in baptism, are to be instructed in Christian life and conduct. Chapters

one to six: "The way of life and the way of death;" chapter seven, "As far as baptism is concerned, after you have said all this, baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Further prescriptions regarding the mode of baptism: triple immersion, wherever possible in flowing water; where necessary in other than flowing water, even in warm water (probably in the case of the sick). In an emergency, pouring in the name of the Holy Trinity is also valid. (However, see above, *Baptismus clinicorum*.) The baptizer and the one about to be baptized are to fast beforehand. The teachings of the apostles show that instead of immersion, simple sprinkling [likely only pouring] also becomes customary, so that the baptizer and the one being baptized, as well as some members of the church, likely members of the household or such as were involved in the conversion, fast before baptism . . . . The act of baptism is as yet not the privilege of an official [that is of a church cleric]. No certain evidence of infant baptism can be traced during this period of time either." [Herzog.]

r) We cite here for the purpose of a simple exposition, Greek words in the New Testament which have reference to the concept of baptism. The dictionaries which we have used are completely neutral regarding the theological concept as such and the definitions cited serve merely to clarify the matter. I. *Greek-German Dictionary* by Dr. Valentin Christian Friedrich Rost, Braunschweig, Georg Westermann, 1859. We cite the Greek words in Latin script "Baptistes,"- one dipping in, baptizer (Joannes Baptistes—John the Baptist); "baptizo": 1) I dip in, moisten, pour over; 2) draw up (water); 3) baptize: passive—to bathe oneself, to be baptized. From that is derived "baptisis," "baptismos," "baptisma"—the act of dipping, bathing; baptism. "Baptisterion": 1) place of bathing; 2) baptismal cell. II. Dr. Johann Christian August Heyse's *Fremdwoerterbuch*, Hannover, Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1879. "Baptisterion" (from the Greek "baptizein," to submerse) to baptize; "baptisma"—in Greek, baptism as a sacrament of the church. "Baptismus: "baptismus per immersionem," through dipping in water, or "per aspersionem," through sprinkling with water, as we practice it; "Baptisterium" (from the Greek "baptisterion," actually bathing place)—the bathtub; the baptistery. III. Brockhaus' *Kleines Konversationslexikon*, Leipzig, 1886. "Baptisma, Baptismus" (Greek), dipping in water; baptism. "Baptisterium"—baptistery, formerly a building adjoining the bishop's cathedral, for the performance of baptism, having a baptismal font in the middle of it.

s) We see that according to the literal and biblically symbolical meaning as well as according to the scientific research of impartial experts in language and history, immersion was the normal and original mode of baptism, and the M.B. Church has been quite correct in introducing this form of holy baptism.

t) However, as far as the utter rejection of pouring and sprinkling in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost is concerned in the case of believers whose testimony, in word and deed, the church can believe in regard to the renewal of their own hearts through the Holy Ghost, and who give sincere assurance that this act (before or after their conversion) is the equivalent of a baptismal covenant with Christ and God's church to them, in our own opinion this represents an over-zealous and exaggerated estimate of formal and material elements in the spiritual realm; for *baptizein* also means pouring, etc. This intolerance has always been painful to us, to which fact we have repeatedly testified,[102] without wanting to cause dispute or offence. Nor did the M.B. Church, at its secession in 1860 as mentioned previously, express this view, and the first official document of the Molotschna congregation, in which it is directly emphasized that only immersion is baptism, is the *Promemoria* of the petition to the Department of Crown Lands, dated December 20, 1863 (cf. #175). Huebert and Becker were elected and consecrated as ministers, others as deacons, before they or the congregation thought they had to be baptized. And while a few were baptized in private, others continued unrestrained in office without baptism: Huebert until the middle of May, 1861, Claassen and others until late in 1862. The Chortitza-Einlage M.B. Church, however, as we already know, was already immersion-minded before its formal organization.

u) Why would the author want to recognize pouring and sprinkling as valid forms of baptism and yet not consider them to be in keeping with the original form of baptism? And why would he want to have communion at the Lord's Table with all believers regardless of their differences in respect to baptism and spiritual understanding? First, in view of the Scriptural word "the letter killeth." Second, because the word "baptizein"—aside from the meaning to immerse—also means to wet, to pour (sprinkling and washing), and so the identification of these concepts with "baptism"[103] is wholly possible. Third, because of precedents in the Old Covenant: Elijah, for example sacrificed on the "heights" of Carmel (and sacrificing on the high places was strictly condemned—one should check all references in respect to sacrifices upon high places and also in regard to Solomon); and yet the Lord deigned to look on his servant who, it seems, no longer possessed full knowledge of the Mosaic law concerning rituals. Compare 2 Kings 22—one of His most splendid and powerful revelations during the time of the Old Covenant and given in connection with a sacrifice which was, according to the letter of the law, irregular. And yet this man Elijah is placed, in the realm of transfiguration, next to Moses. Likewise, the Levite Samuel, although not legally qualified to do so, offers a sacrifice because the

priesthood and regular worship had deteriorated with the loss of the ark of the covenant. God does not hold everyone responsible for disorders in worship and decline in understanding which have arisen during the course of time as a result of collective guilt, but looks at the heart. Fourth, the author has from his youth to old age traced God's footprints in the history of His servants and has found no difference in the power of grace between those who were baptized according to our understanding and were strict immersionists or not so strict, and those who were baptized as infants and came to an awareness [of God] through confirmation or otherwise: Carey, Oncken, Koebner, Liebig and others (strict immersionists);—Bunyan (not a strict immersionist);—Spurgeon (strict in regard to baptism of members, but tolerant in regard to participation in holy communion);—George Mueller, Robert K. Chapman, F.W. Baedeker and others (who were baptized by our mode and who preached it, yet who also tolerated members who were baptized as infants);—Moody (Methodist), Ernst Gebhardt (Methodist), Paul Gerhard, Spener, A. H. Francke, Hiller and others (all four Lutherans), Tersteegen (Reformed), Zinzendorf, Wesley—and Pastor Wuest! The chain of God-blessed infant-baptizers knows no end! Who knows how much these have meant or mean to us through sermon, song, writings and the example of their faith! Whose songs fill our songbooks? Whose works, besides those of Menno and Spurgeon, line the shelves of our ministers and reading members? Whose songs make us feel particularly solemn during the communion service? Why should we not heartily bless those whom God blesses and through whom He blesses us?

v) Now, what would be the correct, non-sectarian, God-pleasing middle road with regard to the ecclesiastical practices of the M.B. Church, given its present circumstances and obligation in the church of Christ ("to restore everything to its primitive state" to the best of its ability, *Confession of Faith*, 1900/1902, p. 5) in accordance with its received understanding and conviction— since one may be able to guide a stream (or the development of a church), but not reverse its flow? The author, along with the late C.H. Spurgeon, believes church membership should be based strictly upon baptism, but one should aspire toward spiritual fellowship in word, prayer and the spreading of the Gospel, in works of charity and mercy with all children of God, whatever their understanding of baptism may be, as well as at the Lord's Table. Membership in our churches is, after all, not synonymous with membership in "God's Church," to which all "children of God" belong (*Confession of Faith*, article III). Every individual church is only an "association," a part of God's Church (of the "one Church of Christ"). If we cannot accept someone into our "church association," which is called the M.B. Church or something else, because of differences in

understanding, we do not thereby exclude him from God's Church—in this matter hopefully all Mennonite Brethren are agreed!? But if we refuse communion fellowship in our "association" to a child of God because of our lack of understanding, then we offend a member of Christ's Body. If the M.B. Church as a body cannot yet decide in favor of such fellowship at communion, one should permit it in love and kindness to those who wish to do it in private circles according to the program given in Waldheim in May of 1903. (See #198 for more on this matter.) The duty of tolerant brotherly love towards those who demand "open communion," and of kind indulgence of the "all-too-strict-ones" on the part of "liberated ones," must be no less categorically emphasized. We are absolutely "free" in respect to any difference in understanding of the brother and therefore we cannot understand how anyone can be indignant when others, true to their understanding of God's commandment, cannot agree with him in spiritual matters! This is to demand freedom for themselves but to deny it to the brother and, therefore, to coerce him.

§137 9. a) Another M.B. Church practice, which is closely tied to the question of baptism and which has evoked many questions to this day, is the church marriage of non-baptized individuals. It is said that formerly this never happened among Mennonites. The *Zondagsboode* of the Dutch Mennonites (1899) relates several cases, as examples of many others, in which non-baptized folk were married around 1650, and these non-baptized persons were members of a respectable ministerial and deacon family, Claassen, of Ansloe. Furthermore, it is said that it is non-evangelical. Marriage is a natural right and, if performed and conducted in an orderly manner, also has a natural sacredness about it in the case of non-Christians. We consider it unjust that the spiritual leaders of our Mennonite sister churches refuse to marry the non-baptized. Marriage is only a "church ordinance," not a command of Christ. By refusing them marriage, they force many people to submit to baptism, which is a command of Christ, under false pretences; and thereby they degrade "God's command" (command to baptize) and distort its purpose for the benefit and honor of a "bishop's command" (command to marry), which, in our country, also has the character of a civil act; for unfortunately, there as yet is no possibility for us Protestants of foreign extraction to consummate a legal marriage without the benefit of a legally recognized minister. At a wedding, we ministers are the officials of the Russian State; in the biblical sense we are nothing less than empowered agents of the couple's parents or their substitutes, i.e., the family of the couple to be married, this the more so among us Mennonites since the community is in fact a very large family through natural descent and legal status. In place of the two families of

the couple, we speak the blessing over them, to which the praying congregation, acting as the extended family, speaks its amen as a witness to these important proceedings. However, as representatives of the Christian Church, whose children—if not members[104]—these two in fact are, we share a word from the Scriptures with them, indicating how marriage can become marriage "in the Lord" and admonish them to seek their souls' salvation; that is all. Marriage is sanctified (in the sense of Ephesians 5 and parallel passages) only to the extent that the couple, His children, contract it "in the Lord," or subsequently become Christians and renew the marriage "in the Lord." The most earnest and honest efforts of our believing Mennonite elders and ministers, and their believing[105] church members, to baptize only upright individuals will never be realized as long as the right to marry is dependent on baptism. According to the author's conviction, this association of baptism with marriage is in principle the only non-Mennonite, non-evangelical practice in the household of our sister churches and, in a sense, renders them "state churches" in that full civil rights (the right to marry and whatever is connected with it) are made dependent on church membership through baptism. If we had civil marriages, then this approach would not apply, but now it is completely justified.

b) Furthermore, it has been said that the marriage of unbaptized individuals is against Russian civil law! It is a known fact to the central civil authorities that the M.B. Church has departed from the practice of the Krimmer Mennonite Church in marrying unbaptized couples. The state has declared through its highest and most competent authority, the Ministry of the Interior, Department for Spiritual Matters, 1880 and 1896 (November 25, No. 4731), that "these religious differences of opinion between the M.B. Church and other Mennonites have no significance." (Cf. *Glaubensbekenntnis*, 1900-1902, German and Russian legal postscript, page 56.) This question has been brought to the attention of the highest civil authorities in connection with the German Baptists, who enjoy the same ecclesiastical rights as the Mennonites and other Protestants. The Ministry of the Interior, Department for Spiritual Matters, answered, 1889 December 12, sub No. 1917, that "this question could be decided only by the clergymen performing the marriage ceremony, in this case by the Baptist ministers" whose competence in marriage questions involving their own members is based on the same legal articles of the document cited earlier as those which grant final authority in marriage matters to Lutherans, Reformed and the Evangelical Lutheran General Consistory. Consequently, the highest authority of the Empire renounces all governmental interference in marriage matters among Mennonites and other Protestants, insofar as they do not involve criminal or civil issues. Likewise, the Russian State

recognizes marriages among the Molokans and those who practice no baptism, and permits marriages between Protestants and (non-baptized) Jews and Mohammedans (Vol. XI, Part 1. Article 328, of the entire collection, 1896 edition). The Mennonite spiritual leaders therefore have to decide the matter entirely on the basis of the Scriptures and their conscience, together with the church, without any dependence on civil law or authorities; on them alone rests the responsibility in regard to this non-evangelical procedure. (Compare further under #212.)

10. *Audiatur et altera pars*—One should also hear the other side! §137(2)

a) Remaining true to this principle even in this matter is made possible through a letter—received immediately prior to the printing of this chapter on baptism—from our venerable minister and elder, Isaak Peters of America, a vehement opponent of baptism by immersion, and, as already stated (see above #19), one of our foremost authorities on old-Mennonite literature, and, as far as we are concerned, without a doubt a believer and an honest man. May his excessive zeal, as we understand it, confront the equally excessive zeal of the strict immersionists. In my opinion, Dirk Philips would have written in the same vein as Bishop Peters. Menno, we think, would, with considered calmness, have called the zealots of both camps to exercise moderation.

b) Father Peters writes:

"Which is the evangelical pattern and form of Christian water baptism?

1. "The Apostle Paul teaches in Ephesians 4:5-6: 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.' There is only one baptism in the true sense of the word, without which no one is fit for God's kingdom; but this is not water baptism. John the Baptist testified of this baptism when he said: 'One comes after me Who will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire!' These baptisms are not two, however, but a double baptism, and are so closely related to one another that they cannot be separated from each other; and on Pentecost this prophecy of a baptism to come was fulfilled, according to Acts 2:1-4.

2. "The Apostle Paul also speaks of this baptism in I Corinthians 12:13, where we read: 'For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and all were made to drink of one Spirit!' The correct understanding of this baptism is as follows, that the spirit of man, through sin, died a spiritual death, as it were, and is in need of a reawakening to spiritual life—which life man had before the fall. And the means for such a reawakening is described by the word 'baptism,' which means 'incorporation,' that is, a re-incorporation with

God, with Whom fellowship was broken through the fall. But Holy Scripture speaks of three kinds of baptism: water, spirit and blood baptism. John, too, testifies concerning this three-fold baptism, and how all three fit together, when he writes: 'This is He who came with water and blood (Jesus Christ), not with water alone but with water and blood. And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. There are three witnesses in heaven: the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree.' Therefore, spirit, water, and blood baptisms belong together if they are to achieve their intended purpose. The latter refers to Christ's baptism of suffering and blood, Luke 12:49-50 and Matt. 26:28, a baptism on which our salvation alone depends. Whoever receives water baptism without the baptism of the Spirit has as yet no part in Christ's blood baptism, which alone saves according to 1 John 1:7, for only the baptism of the Spirit can produce a 'walking in the light,' as He, God, is in the light, that is, a life of Christian discipleship according to John 8:12. Only then does the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse us from all sin, Revelation 1:5-6; for through the baptism of the Spirit the spirit of man, though dead in sin, is awakened, renewed, cleansed and made holy; even though this Holy Ghost is called 'water' in the Old Testament, in Isaiah 44:3 and Ezekiel 36:25, where the communication of the same is called 'pouring' in the former reference and 'sprinkling' in the latter, both of which have been fulfilled in this form in the New Testament and are called baptism. Water is the flowing element for the cleansing of all bodily filth upon the body, but the spiritual pollution of the Spirit in the heart no natural water can remove; consequently, even water baptism cannot again restore that fellowship with God which has been broken through the fall and which must be achieved in this mortal life if we want to dwell in eternal bliss. For that purpose a baptism of the Spirit is absolutely necessary; of this baptism of the Spirit water baptism is an external symbol, a likeness, and serves to attest the need for a baptism of the Spirit which, however, would remain incomprehensible to our minds without some symbol or likeness. And John the Baptist, too, always connects water baptism with the baptism of the spirit when he says: 'I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I . . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.' Matthew 3:11. Thus Christ also testified of John's baptism as belonging together with the baptism of the Spirit: "John baptized you with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit,' Acts 1:5. And when John had baptized Jesus in the Jordan, He was immediately also baptized from on high with the Holy Spirit by God the Father, an example of the pattern and form of the word 'baptism,' the same fashion in which the baptism of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples of Jesus on the first day of Pentecost of the New Testament, according to Acts 2:1-4. And in accordance with

this example all true believers and disciples of Christ must be incorporated into God's church; only then are they acknowledged by Christ as born-again children of God. [106]

3. "Since it has already been demonstrated on the basis of the teaching of John the apostle, that both baptisms, water and spirit baptism, belong together, since water baptism is a symbol of the baptism of the Spirit, and since the true Christian church has also practiced water baptism in the form of spirit baptism since it was founded, a fact which also accords with John's language at his baptism, 'I baptize you with [107] water,' so naturally both must be practiced in one and the same form. This truth, that he, too, although in the Jordan because of circumstances and opportunity, applied water onto the person baptized is plainly evident from John's words at the baptism, otherwise he would have said, 'I baptize you in the water!' Therefore, if we grant the Spirit of Christ a little more room in our hearts than our acquired concepts of nature permit, He testifies clearly in the words of John that he does not move the person baptized, but the water of baptism, which he has conveyed upon the person. And Paul teaches, among other things, in II. Cor. 10:4-6, '. . . take every thought captive to obey Christ.' And after Christ had consecrated His disciples for apostleship and commissioned them through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, He also instructed them through the Spirit, according to John 16:12-15, to practice water baptism in the same form in which they had received the baptism of the Spirit. This, however, still accorded with the pattern and form of John's baptism, if we really believe that John practiced what he preached. And this was really in order since the apostles were to go into all the world, also to the cold northern regions where a form of baptism was required which could be practiced in all seasons, winter and summer, under all human circumstances, [108] on sick and death beds, so that one did not need to chop a hole through the ice first in order to be able to baptize by immersing the body of the candidate in the ice-cold water, as is customary nowadays. And this baptism by sprinkling our Mennonite Church has always practiced after the Reformation, since Menno Simons joined the so-called Anabaptists, for some 150 years; and because of differences of opinion about the form of baptism he evidently never fellowshipped with Baptists [should perhaps read *Dompelaars?*], which can clearly be seen from the second part of the *Martyrs' Mirror*, a true church history."

4.) "Baptism by immersion has its origin in the words 'baptisma' and 'baptizo'; baptism and baptize are derived from the Greek language of the original text from which Luther translated the New Testament. And thus one has come to understand baptism to mean simply a complete dipping or immersion in water. But because this was not in

agreement with the language of John the Baptist, with his *with* water, one has found, after more careful investigation, that because of a dearth of vocabulary in the Greek language, the two words do not designate only dipping and immersion, but also sprinkling and pouring. [Correct: cf. above our "Exegesis" and footnote at #136.8.u] (*Dictionary of Four Languages*, Amsterdam, in the Revenstinianischen Press, in 1634. *Lit.* 13.M Sp. pp. 142-143.)

5. "Nowadays much greater emphasis is placed on the baptism of John than on the baptism of Christ, because Christ was also baptized by John the Baptist *in* the Jordan, although also *with* water. But the latter appears as rather insignificant to the rational mind of the 'natural man.' One often hears the words, 'What good can that little bit of water do?' [?], from which one indwelt by Christ's Spirit may immediately conclude whose child the questioner is. And such people abandon the baptism of Christ with which they have been baptized, a baptism based on Holy Scripture and taught in the catechism according to Matthew 28:19, and administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Naturally, it is only a baptism with water, as were all baptisms of which we read in the New Testament. Such people now belatedly undergo a further baptism with the baptism of John *in* water, but not *with* water, as was the practice of John, allowing the entire body to be submerged. In so doing, they abandon the acquired faith of their forefathers and are baptized, on the basis of a new faith, with much water and by immersion of the whole body. Thus, a cleasing power [?!] is ascribed to the sheer quantity of water in baptism instead of, to the blood of Christ, according to 1 John 1:7 and Revelation 1:5-6, and so outward baptism becomes the golden calf[109] according to Menno Simons, *Complete Works*, page 290.

6. "But why should one hobble around the baptism of John in regard to the form of external baptism and entirely bypass the teaching of Christ [?!] simply because it contains no support for immersion baptism, for we do not find a single example of the submersion of the entire body during baptism in the New Testament? Nor do we have a single instance in which baptism was carried out except where instruction was given either, which itself bears witness to the fact that baptism occurred according to a form which could be practiced everywhere and so could always remain in accord with John's words, 'I baptized you *with* water!' John indeed testified clearly and lucidly concerning the purpose of his work, the extent to which it had validity, and that he was now decreasing and Christ was increasing, according to John 1:28-34. There is no proof in the New Testament of the teaching of 'immersion in water' baptism; the latter rests only on suppositions. But for baptism by pouring one can find numerous proofs [?!] everywhere, as

I have abundantly demonstrated in this letter, and want to conclude the matter finally by saying that in my life of faith I do not stand on the side of the universal Christian Church[110] but on the side of the little flock of Christ, of which Christ said, Luke 12:32, it is the Father's good pleasure to give it His Kingdom. During all ages, this small flock endured contempt and scorn while the large churches, under the appearance of piety, accomplished great things, and that in the name of Jesus. In regard to them, Christ's words have been fulfilled: 'Many are called but few are chosen,'—in order that they might never belong to the class described in Matthew 7:21-23. For Christ says that at the time of His return it shall be as it was in the days of Noah and Lot, Matthew 24:37-39 and Luke 17:28-29. Then it shall be as Christ indicates in Luke 18:8. Amen. Isaak Peters. Please accept this in love, as it was written." [Received together with a letter dated March 18, 1910.]

c) Three days later, in connection with a letter sent by us to him, Father Peters sent us a treatise, an essay confuting the teaching concerning the millennium. We quote here (in connection with Brother Peters' precise definition of that which according to his understanding is Mennonite,—from a scriptural point of view—and that which is non-Mennonite) his final conclusions in that treatise, although this is really not the place to discuss the question of the "kingdom." Perhaps, if space permits, we can present this very interesting and very acute essay under the title "Mennonite Confession of Faith." The venerable, grey-haired bishop writes, in conclusion: "On earth Christ has no earthly kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom of grace consisting of His believers. But He possesses a heavenly kingdom of glory, into which He shall in the end lead all His believers. That is the biblical teaching of Christ's future [one and only one resurrection, that is a simultaneous resurrection of all men] and also the original Mennonite teaching; for the doctrine concerning a future kingdom of Christ was not accepted in the Mennonite churches until the previous century. Menno Simons never held to the doctrine of a millennium, and he who believes in it is no Mennonite, nor does the name of Menno save anyone since . . . 'salvation is in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved' except that of Jesus. Amen." Thus far concerning the old-Mennonite faith of Isaac Peters.

d) That the teaching of the millennium is contrary to early Mennonite doctrine is certain: Menno and his fellow workers were vigorous opponents of the teaching; they considered it a dangerous error. (Compare also above #1, point 2.) We allow the question, whether or not this teaching is biblical, to remain entirely without discussion here, but we have asked ourselves a hundred times: what have we gained from the manner in which this teaching has been practiced among us for half a

century, and particularly during the last eight years, in regard to our "being sanctified wholly" (I Thess. 5:23), and our greater fitness to be the "salt and light of the world" for the benefit of mankind now and in keeping with God's eternal purpose? We ourselves have no positive answer. Though I am not really an "Old" Mennonite, I have for years been tired, tired, tired of the foreign influences and would like to urge all reformers ("Old" Mennonite and Brethren), especially the leaders: Stand still for a moment and ask yourself this question from the perspective of church history: What is Mennonitism? Have we perhaps forgotten to relearn that which was good, as a balance to the endless new, new, new?! Are we not losing a large and essential part of our Mennonite psyche, in the good sense? What does God want of us as a group, a fellowship: that we, while calling ourselves Mennonite, become a conglomerate of Lutheranism, Baptist, and Plymouthism, etc. (we mean in the understanding and manner of expressing our Christianity)? What is the specific direction that God has assigned to us through our original doctrines, history and present situation? Certainly we should now more seriously begin to study our own background, examine the newly acquired for its values, throw away the ballast and deliberately, discreetly, bring the good old and the good new—for "every scribe fit for the kingdom" brings forth old and new from his treasures—into a proper relationship.

e) And to that, an added word about baptism. This comes from an outstanding person, qualified and called to teach, a man whom we have learned to appreciate and love, an elderly spiritual leader of the Russian Mennonite Church. We may mention his name later at the appropriate place with reference to this question. In a letter dated March 27, 1910, this brother writes: ". . . the . . . congregation allows even infant baptism to stand as a form of baptism, not as the normal form of baptism, it is true, but nevertheless as a form of baptism which the Lord acknowledges by His Spirit [cf. #136.8 and footnotes for (b)3 of #137.2] and considers not merely Mennonites and Baptists as baptized Christians, but Lutherans, Reformed, Catholics and Orthodox as well. On occasion it will even celebrate communion with Lutherans, as of course also with Baptists and Mennonite Brethren, if they express a wish for it. It also allows mixed marriages with those who have been baptized as infants, as well as with Baptists and Mennonite Brethren. We believe that the body of Christ is to be found in all churches and communions of the Lord's church. We believe in one universal Christian church, one fellowship of the saints—we are in fact true Alliance people . . . . We baptize . . . in keeping with our Mennonite confession of faith, only upon the testimony of repentance for sin and faith in Christ, though we indeed require only the minimum [lowest level] of that which the Scriptures

expect of candidates for baptism, when the maximum [highest level] is still lacking. If, aside from those who have already reached the maximum and who, like Cornelius of Caesarea, had already received the baptism of the Spirit when he was baptized with water, we also baptize those who manifest a repentant and believing attitude, that is, who only possess faith in the form of a longing for salvation and confess the truth of Acts 4:12 and that 'Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, my beauty are, my glorious dress,' when faith is present as a sure and confident hope and as a truth not to be doubted, according to Hebrews 11:1, and combined with a proper way of life [compare ## 137 and 212 above, especially the end], hoping that they may eventually achieve the maximum, the assurance of faith and the reception of the baptism of the Spirit—then that too is a baptism upon the faith in accordance with the Mennonite confession . . . . Menno Simons certainly baptized such souls also. [Compare 5e and *#11*e.] Neither Menno Simons nor the apostles in their time withheld baptism from those who had only experienced the minimum of that which the Scriptures teach a candidate for baptism should possess. You might say [of the letter writer and his congregation] that they are simple Mennonites, attempting to follow the Mennonite confessions of faith [though far from a full understanding of Menno's teaching and a strict interpretation of the old confessions, which is also true of this writer, though not of Elder Isaak Peters]. Against the fullest experience we are in no way opposed. That is also the reason why we are happy when these persons remain humble in spirit . . . ."

f) We have now heard two other sides in addition to that of the M.B. Church and the author's own view. We have seen how infinitely variably—to the point of grotesque, mutually exclusive contradictions—sincere, believing, respected, well-educated Mennonite authorities—widely read men—who think deeply, can define the essence of Mennonitism. (We could add here that the very highly regarded second writer is as enthusiastic a proponent of the millennium as the equally worthy Isaak Peters is its opponent.) We must be very careful, with regard to all groups, not to assert that such and such persons are not Mennonites! At the same time we should have the liberty to assert our position while respectfully and lovingly tolerating that of others, concluding thus: "But for me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court" (I Cor. 4:3). In the final analysis we must allow everyone who claims to be a Christian (whether a good or bad Mennonite in terms of the early Anabaptists) to stand on his own under the banner, "It is God who judges me."

XXI.
SEVERE HARDSHIPS OF THE YOUNG EINLAGE M.B. CHURCH IN RELATION TO THE TOTAL MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD OF THE CHORTITZA DISTRICT

§138 1. The Chortitza Area Administrative Office set the tone for the history of the oppression imposed on this church in a circular dated February 28, 1862, that is, even before the baptism:

"To the village mayors:

"It has come to the attention of the Supervisory Commission that there are persons belonging to the new sect of so-called Friends of Jerusalem (Templers), followers of the theologian Hoffmann of Kirschenhardthof, near Stuttgart in the Kingdom of Wuerttemberg, who are endeavoring to entice colonists over to their sect,[111] and who are preaching principles which do not agree with the views of the government and which run contrary to the established practices of the colonies. As a consequence, the Supervisory Commission, in accordance with resolution 472 circulated by the most worthy chairman to the Area Administrative Office on January 16 of this year, urging very strictly, that it be seen to, that preaching within the colonies by any unfamiliar private individuals who might be visiting the colonies and do not have a pastoral calling be forbidden. This applies in particular to foreigners. Anyone disobeying this rule will be subject to prosecution under the law.

"Those fanatics, who have arisen in some of our colonies, however, do not use the name Friends of Jerusalem or followers of the theologian Hoffmann; they simply call themselves converted Christians. The principles they have adopted, however, and to the propagation of which they devote all their energy, especially such men as Gerhard Wieler and Peter Berg in Chortitza and Heinrich Neufeld, Abraham Unger and Heinrich Epp in Einlage, will lead to destruction. Berg, for example, maintains that he is a man of God, and that what he does as a man of God, is right. He also asserted that he was at liberty to pronounce a judgment of damnation upon his own father, which he has then also proceeded to do without any timidity. Their arrogance and delusion has once again reached[112] the point where they have renounced our church fellowship, so that they may pursue their wicked ways with less interference. They no longer wish to be known as Mennonite [cf. further, May 7 note], which indeed they are not. The church is a whorehouse, they scold. Admonition and persuasion have no effect upon them, since they have become totally taken up with the idea that they are born again and consequently possess the Spirit of God, who makes no mistakes. Police authority must therefore be put to use to keep these dangerous people within bounds. The village

mayors are advised that in the future adherents of this sect are forbidden in the strongest terms to conduct meetings amongst themselves or to visit people in their homes in order to convert them to their beliefs. For those who disobey these rules, village mayors are instructed to direct those from other colonies back to their homes; and if there are those who will not return willingly, they are to be taken into custody and dispatched under guard back to the place where they belong. No one is to be found roaming around on the streets after 10 p.m. In Chortitza and Einlage it will probably be necessary to maintain a night watch for this purpose. It is the opinion of the Area Administrative Office that it would be well to withdraw from these sectarians, foster no association with them and simply have nothing to do with them. It may be that the breaking off of all relations with them and, where necessary, the application of law enforcement by police may serve to bring these deluded people back to their senses. Should all of this prove fruitless and these people persist in their heresies, then they must, according to the law, be handed over to higher authorities as harmful sectarians so that they might be banned from the colonies and sent into exile. (Compare above, #108c.) The foreigners belonging to the sect are to be removed forever from the colonies at the first opportunity in the springtime.[113] Village offices are to make this statute known to their congregations so that they might take it to heart and act upon it. Chortitza Area Administrative Office, February 28, 1862. Colony Administrator.—Member of Commission,—Member of Commission." [The names are missing in the copy obtained from the archives of the Einlage M.B. Church.]

§139 2. The regulations of the authorities in their practical application. Brother Jacob Janzen of Sergeievka relates: ". . . Thus it happened that on a certain day in February, 1862, the mayor called the village church [of Kronsweide] together in order to decide the course of action. There my father [Wilhelm Janzen] was informed that the meetings must cease and that he must stay at home. My father responded: We must obey God rather than men. To which my uncle replied: Why do you not ask him who his apostles are? Since my father would not promise to remain at home, Mayor N.N. became very angry and ran outside to pick up some rods. When the village members saw that, they all hastily dispersed and no beating took place, though my father was immediately taken off to jail. A day later the mayor's assistants were again asked to bring him forward. He was again questioned, but continued to stand firm. At that a bunch of straw was laid down outside before the door and the strong Mr. N. literally tore the clothes from his body, ripping them to shreds . . . and then began to beat him with six sturdy rods, ten lashes in all, as heavily as he could manage in his rage. My blessed father felt only five of the lashes; from the rest the Lord delivered him. When this was done, he was again taken off to confinement.

His fur coat was taken from him(!) and he had to go into a summer room, which had not been heated all winter long. We were poor and not well-dressed. Father said he froze terribly in that cold room. The owner, Mr. N. tossed him a block of wood: There, something to sit upon! But my father could not sit; he was too badly beaten! He sat down for a short while and drew himself together so that his teeth might not chatter so, but soon he was moving again, since he could not sit for any length of time. The Lord helped him out of all his distress: it was bright with light in the room though there was no light, and he experienced an overwhelming sense of joy. Thus he spent two days and two nights. This man [in whose custody he was being kept] had sold his farm to Johann Penner. He wanted to move away and be rid of the prisoner. People were asked whether anyone might be willing to have the man. A certain Johann Neufeld volunteered to take him. He was sternly questioned whether he would treat the prisoner as they were demanding. He assured them he would, but his intention was in fact to show compassion to him, and that is what happened. Neufeld demonstrated great kindness to him. After he had been with him for three days . . . he was transported to Chortitza . . . . There he was forced to sit another three days and nights in the Cholodnaia [cold jail cell]. On March 9 he was released and returned home at night, his lash wounds still not healed and his clothes still too small, so terribly had he been beaten. [It is apparent that the 'Mennonite brotherhood of Chortitza' practiced quick and decisive 'pastoral care'! We were unable to secure any documents from the church council. Were there none? It appears that they preferred to do less writing and more 'dealing' here than in the Molotschna Colony.] That was Friday, and on Sunday, March 11, Einlage had its first baptism, at which 18 were baptized, among them my father. [Being dealt with so 'strictly' by the Chortitza Mennonite brotherhood could apparently also produce 'strict' baptizers!] The second baptism, on March 17, involving 17 souls, also took place at Einlage. This writer [Jacob Janzen] was also present."

§140 3. Gathering the Scattered. Brother Heinrich Epp recounts:[114] Those who had been scattered about in 1855 began to congregate once more, and together with the Einlage brethren formed a church fellowship of 91 souls within a few months. Neufeld and Unger were chosen as their ministers. [The date for this election is not indicated; apparently it took place on the Sunday of the first Einlage baptism, or perhaps even earlier?] These two and Gerhard Wieler now became the object of persecution. A series of judicial procedures followed: from the village mayors to the church elders, from the elders to the Area Administrative Office. Since nothing brought the desired results, the brethren were excommunicated from the church [from which they had already withdrawn—though here also it has not been possible to establish the date] and, as had also been done in the Molotschna, put under the ban and prevented from having any civic or commercial

intercourse with others. But—"whoever had debts, was pressured." The Chortitza Area Administrative Office arraigned 27 heads of families on March 29, 1862, asking whether "they intended to persist with this their belief." When they replied in the affirmative, they were asked to sign a paper set before them which stated that if their Mennonite congregation thought it right that they be sent away, they would render obedience immediately and renounce all their rights. It was a promise the arraigned refused to give. Shortly thereafter the new group sent Brother Gerhard Wieler as their representative to St. Petersburg [as we already know], where for a number of months he worked together with Brother Claassen of Liebenau, and, on June 4, submitted a most submissive petition to His Majesty, the Tsar [cf. below], which agreed in substance entirely with Claassen's earlier petition. As we have already seen in relation to the Kuban settlement and elsewhere, this petition gradually brought forth good results.

§141 4. The "Answers" of the Chortitza-Einlage Brethren, given May 7, 1862. (According to the diaries of A. Unger, Epp and others), the newly established church's two ministers, Abraham Unger and Heinrich Neufeld were called before the assistant chief of police of the Province of Ekaterinoslav, a man called Baschinsky, and were questioned in the presence of Chortitza colony administrator Dyck. Their answers can be taken as the first written confession of faith of the Brethren of the Chortitza District (cf. Confession of Faith 1900/1902, page 3). For lack of space the questions will be omitted, since the answeres make clear what their content was.

"Answers [A]:

"1) I, the Mennonite Heinrich Neufeld, son of Abraham, am 43 years old, was born in the colony of Schoenhorst [District of Chortitza] into the Mennonite religion, raised in the colony of Einlage, am able to read and write German, and am married for the second time; I have three children from my first marriage [name and age]. I have never been judged nor brought before a court of law.

"2) I, the Mennonite Heinrich Neufeld, have in no way renounced the Mennonite religion [NB]; rather I confess that the reformer Menno Simons instituted baptism and the Lord's Supper in accordance with the Word of God. In the course of time, however, these ordinances were corrupted to such an extent that they were no longer observed in accordance with the Word of God. Since a number of us Mennonites have, through the Spirit of God, come to this realization, we, that is, Abraham Unger and I, have been confirmed by our fellow brothers, and the Holy Spirit gives us this testimony, that we are to serve this congregation in accordance with the Word of God, Acts 20:28.

"We perform holy baptism only on persons who have become believers, and that by immersion, Mark 16:15, 16; Matt. 3:13-17; Acts 8:37-39; Rom. 6:4.

"Our congregation now numbers 76 male and female souls. We do not entice any person to join our fellowship; rather only those who are convicted of the truth through the Holy Spirit are accepted by us.

"Regarding marriage we confess that it is instituted by God and is to be kept holy.

"We celebrate holy communion with bread and wine, and that not only as a memorial, but as the true flesh and blood of Christ, John 6:53, 54. [One should note this emphasis upon the 'substantiality' in the Lord's Supper, here as well as by Unger.]

"The cleansing of our sins does not take place through baptism, rather we are justified before God through faith in Jesus Christ, Rom. 5:1; I John 1:6, etc.: If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world. We confess, moreover,[115] that if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, Hebrews 10:26.

"No one has joined our fellowship from the Russian church." [116]

"Answers [B]:

"1) I, the Mennonite Abraham Unger, son of Henry, age 37, born in the colony of Einlage and into the Mennonite religion, still live there. Wife Catherine [other matters concerning the family]. I have never been judged nor investigated before.

"2) Asked concerning the matter under dispute, I, like the other members of our congregation, give notice that I recognize the Mennonite confession of faith as it is set up in the Mennonite catechism [NB!]. I, like Heinrich Neufeld, Gerhard Wieler and Peter Berg, have not concocted a new teaching or formed a new sect; rather I, like Heinrich Neufeld, together with a number of other Mennonites, have come to the realization that the elders in the colonies of the Chortitza District do not live up to the Mennonite confession of faith. Thereupon we spoke to the elders,

requesting that they reinstitute the Mennonite customs; but these declared that to be impossible. We thereupon felt compelled to elect our own ministers from our midst, in accordance with the Mennonite rights. As a result, Heinrich Neufeld and I were elected and subsequently baptized in the river Tokmak near the Molotschna by Gerhard Wieler, who had been commissioned to perform this act by the local ministers. This teaching we draw from the Word of God and the teachings of our reformer, Menno Simons, who is the founder of the same, and call ourselves Mennonite brethren [NB!].

"Our teaching differs in that we put into practice the Mennonite confession, while you allow the teaching to be corrupted and practice it only partially.

"We fully recognize ecclesiastical customs; we allow marriage; it is binding for one's entire life; the marriage ceremony is performed by the minister after the couple to be married has reached the right age.

"Holy communion is distributed by the elders and the ministers. It consists of bread and wine; in accordance with the word of the Lord, the bread is broken as the body of Christ and distributed, the same is done with the wine as the blood of Christ. Only those are allowed access to the service who can prove, by word and by deed, that they are true disciples of Christ.

"Baptism is performed by us only through submersion in water, and that only on such persons as have made a contrite confession of their sins and have found forgiveness for their sins in the blood of Jesus Christ.

"If someone blasphemes the teachings of Christ and returns to a life of sin, he will not be helped by his former forgiveness and is excluded from our fellowship.

"According to the Word of God and Menno's teachings, [117] we cannot accept the pouring that occurs in the corrupt Mennonite Church as a valid form of baptism; because of this we do not rebaptize but rather only baptize;

"The number of baptized Mennonites is 76 male and female souls, who have all freely requested baptism and live in the colonies of the Chortitza District. I represent one such person. No one of Russian descent has joined us.

"This conviction I shall retain
As long as earth shall hold me;
This I shall think, do, and pursue
As long as I can move. Amen."

[According to a note in Abraham Unger's Diary, Brother J. Isaak was also taken to account here.]

§142 5. Arrest of the Leading Brethren and the Attempts to Take Colonial Status from the Secessionists. Br. Heinrich Epp relates: a) ". . . After being dealt with thus [at the hearing], they returned to their homes for two days, with a premonition that there was more to come. More came. The local authorities took the brethren Neufeld and Unger by night and brought them to the Chortitza Mennonite Area Administrative Office jail where they were confined in a room with covered windows so that they would be unable to read [!]. From here they were taken on May 10, 1862, to the assistant chief of police. He had them taken into the Russian village of Tschernyschevo and placed under guard. The inhabitants were curious, however, and observed that they conducted worship services. They asked them why they were being kept in custody. The brethren were happy to let them know that it was on account of Christ and their faith that they were prisoners. The brethren were grateful that they were being kept under tolerant Russian authorities. Since their guards soon realized that they would make no attempt to flee, they were given permission to go out at night to a village 10 versts distant where they could buy themselves some food. In this manner they were detained for seven weeks, though not in a prison. Instead, they were allowed to move about freely and talk about God's Word, which they did. Although the village was 50 versts away [from Einlage], the journey was frequently made; those who came to the faith at home went there to be baptized, and so the small flock grew. After seven weeks had passed, on June 26, the brethren returned home. b) While the brethren Gerhard Wieler and Johann Claassen stayed on in St. Petersburg, our church was ordered back to the Area Administrative Office where we were once again asked to explain what we intended to do. To this we responded: 'We will wait to find out what the brethren in St. Petersburg are able to accomplish, and whatever decision the government makes concerning us we will accept. This gave them something to reflect upon and once again they allowed us to return home. Since the brethren remained steadfast in the teachings of Christ, still another decree was drafted—which was intended to deprive them of their status as colonists.' The Area Administrative Office announced in all the villages that their church status was to be withdrawn." [Nevertheless, this too bore no fruit. Compare #108,d.]

§143 6. Most humble petition to His Majesty, the Tsar, by Gerhard Wieler. [German translation available in the archives of the Einlage M.B. Church]:

"Your Royal Majesty!

"Most Serene Monarch!

a) "With deepest reverence and childlike submission, the undersigned, commissioned by his fellow-believers, dares to approach you, O

Lord and Tsar, on their behalf, and humbly pray for your gracious answer to our united plea.

b)"The reason is oppression, mistreatment (and constant persecution) because of our faith. Already for some years, a number of persons in the Chortitza and Kronsweide Mennonite Church in the province and district of Ekaterinoslav were awakened by God's Spirit through intensive reading of the Scriptures to a better life and conduct. Recently, after they were fully convinced of the moral and religious decay of their fellow Mennonites, they began to order their lives in strict accordance with the Word of God and the teaching of the reformer Menno Simons, at the same time keeping in mind the rights and privileges granted to the Mennonites in South Russia by the most gracious rulers of Russia.

c)"But our church elders, instead of promoting this work of the Lord, in spite of their being fully convinced that only the Word of God and true fear of the Lord can make citizens faithful and obedient, began to arouse an irreconcilable hatred against us in their congregations. This hatred and the unrighteous acts stemming from it, provoked us to use the rights due us according to God's Word and Menno Simons' teaching, which consist herein: Every Mennonite not only has the liberty, but rather, in the case at hand, the unalterable obligation to leave a Mennonite church that does not conform to his convictions and his conscience, and to join another, or to help organize a new Mennonite church, to which the Russian state law makes no reference whatever. And thus a new Mennonite church, consisting of 91 persons was established, which, according to the custom of their forefathers (who came to their new fatherland with the reputation of being a pious, God-fearing people), now conducted its worship services under the leadership of its ministers, Heinrich Neufeld and Abraham Unger. Now we began to experience severe persecution by our own local Mennonite authorities (the Chortitza Area Administrative Office) in that they oppressed and mistreated us, as the facts in the attached *Promemoria* prove.

"In our distress, wherein we anxiously look for speedy help, we bring our united plea before your exalted throne, O Lord and Tsar, and pray for your most gracious protection in the practice of our evangelical worship and for the cessation of the severe persecutions on the part of the local government administration, in order to be able to live a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and sobriety. The original signed: Mennonite of the Chortitza Colony, Gerhard Wieler, Province and District of Ekaterinoslav,Chortitza Mennonite District. St. Petersburg, June 4, 1862."

e) "*Promemoria* regarding the persecutions in the province and district of Ekaterinoslav, of the Mennonites in the Chortitza District by their Mennonite brethren—and the reason for these persecutions.

f) "Already for several years, the Lord, through His Spirit, awakened many souls among the Mennonites of the Chortitza and Kronsweide Mennonite Church of the Chortitza District, which is located in the Province and District of Ekaterinoslav, to a better life and conduct. They were gradually, and finally, fully convinced of the religious decay of their respective Mennonite congregations, and had to see that the church elders were lenient toward open vices, which neither Christian nor Mennonite doctrine allows. Regretting these sad circumstances, the awakened souls felt compelled to live their lives in strict accordance with God's Word and the teachings of Menno Simons, and to form a new, independent Mennonite Brethren Church.[118] They already had a precedent, set by the Mennonites at the Molotschna in the Province of Taurida, where a flourishing Christian M.B. Church had been established somewhat earlier, amid severe persecution. Because every Mennonite has the liberty to leave a Mennonite Church that does not measure up to his convictions and to join another, or even to help establish a new church, to which the Russian state law makes no reference whatever, but which the Holy Scriptures and Menno Simons' teachings make into a duty for every believing Christian under the present circumstances, a new church fellowship consisting of 91 members was now also formed in the Chortitza Mennonite District, which has since conducted worship services in private homes under the leadership of its two ministers, Heinrich Neufeld and Abraham Unger. But the church elders of the other two Mennonite churches, who looked upon this action as undermining their authority, with the support of a number of influential men in their church, began to arouse irreconcilable hatred in the hearts of the members against some of their own people, Mennonites who had seceded from them only in respect to religion. And after they had begun to excommunicate the secessionists, entirely contrary to God's Word, severe persecutions by the Chortitza Area Administrative Office began, including imprisonment, hunger and beatings, as the following facts prove. All civilian business relationships with the new church were prohibited, including buying, selling and concluding agreements, whereby the complete ruin of their farms and businesses must be foreseen.

g) "In the last [correction: 'first'] half of March of this year, the Mennonite Wilhelm Janzen, of the colony of Kronsweide, was imprisoned for the sake of his faith by his village mayor. Thereupon he received ten lashes of the rod and was told to withdraw from the worship services of his congregation. Because, for conscience sake, he could not promise to do so, he was locked in a cold place where the earth was not yet thawed, after his fur coat had been taken so that he found himself dressed only in light clothing. He could not lie on the frozen earth. And for a whole day he was given nothing to eat. After Janzen had spent several days and nights in this unhealthy place, he was given an additional two days of confinement at the

district office so that he spent a total of eight days in the dark prison. After that he was released. Almost simultaneously, the Mennonite Peter Berg from the Chortitza Colony was imprisoned in a dark cell because of his faith. Before he was locked up, his pockets were searched, and when a small book was found on him, the district assessor said, . . . 'Aha, there's his Testament. Take it away, he's read it long enough!' After eight days, he was released from custody. On March 25 of this year, the Mennonite Johann Toews, from the colony of Nieder-Chortitza, was dragged out of the worship service by the mayor and imprisoned.

h)"At the home of minister Abraham Unger in the colony of Einlage, malicious people and their youth gathered outdoors, and indecently and disruptively burst into the meeting, practically pulling the clothes off some people's backs. A Mennonite from the Chortitza Colony, Gerhard Wieler, who served as teacher in the village of Liebenau in the Province of Taurida, and had directed the school for three and one-half years to the satisfaction of the village congregation was not only dismissed because of his faith in the middle of the school year (in October, 1861), but after he had been unjustly relieved of a part of his property,[119] he was forced to leave the Molotschna Colony in winter, with his sick wife and small child, when the temperature was 20 degrees. This, in spite of the fact that he had an annual visa from the Chortitza Mennonite Area Administrative Office, and had to make the journey of almost 100 versts in stormy weather. At his new place of residence, his oppressed brothers in the faith offered him a good teaching position in the village of Einlage in the Chortitza District. But because he belonged to the newly established M.B. Church, he was also relieved of this position, and since that time, separated from his wife and child who are being supported by the new church, he is almost always in flight in order to evade acts of violence on the part of the Chortitza Area Administrative Office. It has happened that brethren from the new church have been accosted on the street and pulled at by drunken people, as was the case with Minister Heinrich Neufeld on his return from a worship service.

i) "On March 29 of this year, a number of brethren, 27 heads of families, were ordered to appear before the Chortitza Area Administrative Office. After they had been asked whether they would persist in this, their faith in the Lord Jesus, which they affirmed, they were asked to sign a paper which stated that they [the brethren] were ready to obey without question if their Mennonite congregation would see fit to exile them, and that they would completely renounce all their rights. The above-named persons refused to sign.

j) "The Molotschna M.B. Church in the Province of Taurida, which shares a fate similar to that of the Chortitza Brethren, had requested protection from the Supervisory Commission for Foreign Settlers [120] in vain. Therefore they felt compelled to send the Mennonite Johann Claassen

to St. Petersburg to file further complaints with the Ministry of Crown Lands. But this, too, achieved no disposition of the matter because the Supervisory Commission, despite repeated orders from the ministry, has not answered for the period of a whole year; meanwhile the suppressions in the Molotschna and Chortitza Districts persist nevertheless.

k) "This circumstance prompted the new church (in Chortitza) to send the Mennonite Gerhard Wieler from their midst to St. Petersburg with the mandate to seek the protection of the most gracious father of our country. During his [Wieler's] stay in St. Petersburg, the Chortitza Area Administrative Office continues its illegal actions, which are also contrary to God's Word, by dispatching both of the ministers of the church, Neufeld and Unger, according to a telegram, to the chief of police in the Province and District of Ekaterinoslav. The original is signed: The Mennonite Gerhard Wieler from the Chortitza Colony. June 4, 1862."

1) Br. Wieler returned from St. Petersburg at the same time as Br. Claassen, at the end of June, 1862.

§144 7. The Leading Brethren in the Jail for Criminal Investigation. In his diary, Abraham Unger records: a) "On July 12, 1862, we—Abraham Unger, Heinrich Neufeld, Gerhard Wieler and Peter Berg—were transported with police escort to Ekaterinoslav by order of the investigating judge, Mr. Schmigaila, from Nikopol. There we were handed over to the district [criminal] judge, who wanted to release us if we were willing to pay. Since we refused this course, we were taken from there to the police. Here they took down our names, questioned us briefly and took us to the Ostrog [prison], which we reached at sundown. The iron gate opened to us, the soldiers locked it behind us again and took us to the superintendent. He was a sympathetic man who did not want to throw us into a common jail; therefore he gave an order that we should be taken first into the school for the prisoners. It was dark and since the nobility [among the prisoners] had taken possession of all the cells there was no room. (Before this happened, we had been visited by the soldiers, however.) On the trip to this place we had had the privilege of proclaiming the gospel and had been quite happy. But now that we had arrived at this 'kingdom,' composed largely of robbers—doors barred behind us, hearing the clanking of chain-laden people, surrounded by awe-inspiring buildings with their barred windows and foul smells—all of this made a singular impression on me and my heart truly sank! The soldiers locked the second gate . . . . We were taken to the previously mentioned prison school: one large room, four tables and benches for the students in it, room for 20 in all, who were taught there diligently to read and write for four hours mornings and afternoons every day. Their presence made our room unpleasant, but we were thankful nonetheless that we had a place where we had the opportunity to write and

to read, something not permitted anywhere in the prison except in the superintendent's office. We will likely not make it out of here without picking up lice either; we can see them crawling up and down the backs of the other prisoners.

b) "The teacher . . . is an imprisoned noble; and another young gentleman out of this city shares our room. They inquired about our circumstances. Two other noblemen from the adjoining room were present as well and invited us to join them for some tea. Thus the Lord immediately took care of our needs. After prayer we lay down to sleep, but the many thoughts about my imprisonment and my sick family which passed through my soul, the sight of our vaulted room with its iron-barred windows, the horrible yelling of the guards, for a long time allowed no sleep to come to my eyes. I cried to the Lord and he gave me comfort: finally I fell asleep.

c) "July 17. Yesterday evening we received the news that we should be brought before the court today . . . . They took us from this place with 14 soldiers. Quite an impressive appearance! They took our Lord and Master in the same way: the servant is not greater than his master! In this way we were taken to a military court, some two versts distant . . . . Inspector Biller [of the Ekaterinoslav German colonies] was there as well. Following much discussion, they were at a loss to know what to do with us and finally decided to release us on bail. Two officials were already waiting to prepare the necessary documents for signature, which the court officers were to sign. And then suddenly there was a turnabout—they would first see whether it was possible!? The soldiers were ordered to return us to our place. Biller informed us that we would be freed; he would see to it. We promised him that our bail would be paid, thanks to . . . . So it was back to the prison for us . . . . There are 450 men within these prison walls . . . creating a din and clanging of chains which are enough to strike fear within one. O God, when will you remove all the misery of mankind! Lord, have mercy upon us and be gracious! Amen.

d) "July 18 . . . . The director has given us another two days in this room [the school], but then we are to go down below, since we are disturbing the students. Dear Lord, do grant that we might have received a full release by then . . . . Around 12 noon our bail guarantor came and explained to us that we could be free by Saturday, but that the (jail) secretary would first need to be given something or else he could keep us in this place for months yet. . . .

e)"July 19. Today we were again brought before the court . . . . The brethren [from the colonies] accompanied us . . . . In the meantime we sent Brother Loewen to the (jail) secretary . . . what a hungry man he is! . . . . Eventually they will have to let us go. In the court they merely asked us

who the real author of this sect might be, which we had already answered previously, that besides Christ, it was Menno who had begun it. [Cf. #99: Doc. Dec. 27, 1860, Heinrich Huebert.] And then they let us go . . . . We were sent back into our principality again, to learn the meaning of patience . . . .

f) "July 20. We became acquainted with a Molokan . . . . He was pleased to discover that we were here on account of our faith. We loaned him a Russian Testament, which he eagerly read. [They even preached the Gospel to an imprisoned German circus rider and sought to help him in his poverty. Br. G. Wieler had some sharp debates with well-educated unbelieving scoffers. Through a window they cringed to see the terrible sight of men forced to run the gauntlet. The imprisonment of many for years in investigative custody, without interrogation, makes Unger cry to God for justice.] We are encouraged to wait patiently and are grateful to God for all the mercies He has shown to us in prison . . . .

g) "Sunday, July 22 . . . . Today we considered together the 12th chapter of Hebrews and the Lord blessed us richly. . . . July 23. . . . God grant that we might finally get out of this place. Nevertheless, the Lord's will be done! The prospect of a long stay in this place seems too much to take; yet I am convinced that even then He will give me strength. Amen. . . . [Teachers and the director are no longer quite so friendly. The secretary pulls the bailsmen in, he wants more money. Apparently the bail guarantors have become the brokers for both sides! Yet another time into the court with the soldiers and then back into the prison.] . . . July 25 . . . . Oh God, the burden was so great! Oh God, grant us the willingness to submit, we are well nigh crushed."

h) At this point the diary stops. In a letter dated January 4, 1863, Johann Claassen writes: "They were detained in the Ekaterinoslav prison for approximately 14 days." Heinrich Epp, "reports": "They were forced to stay in a common city jail for two weeks." We have the impression that the persecutions of the M.B. Church were always merely a lighter version compared to the suffering of other "brethren" in our land. For our brethren the real burden and anguish of spirit arose out of the fact that the persecutions came from those nearest them, from the "brethren," with whom they felt they shared equal rights and of whose common guarantees of legal protection they were keenly aware.

XXII.

THE EXCESSES OF THE MOLOTSCHNA "ENTHUSIASTS" ALSO FORCE THEIR WAY INTO THE EINLAGE M.B. CHURCH—ITS SUPPRESSION—THE KUBAN SETTLEMENT DISCREDITED. OLD DANZIG

§145 1. "I must confess to my sorrow," complains Brother Heinrich Epp in his "Reports" of 1884, "what took place within the congregation. When the brethren Neufeld, Unger, Gerhard Wieler and Peter Berg returned from prison, the entire congregation came together desiring to learn what they had experienced and to hear what had happened to them. But what did we perceive? These men were not united in their understanding of the gospel!" The other three could not agree with Wieler. Since Brother Wieler was eloquent and highly respected, he eventually won Brother Neufeld to his point of view. And since Neufeld too was highly regarded and clearly a gifted man, almost the entire congregation was won over to their side. "Now they fell from one error into another. Young women were not allowed to appear in public without caps (bonnets), even at their weddings,[121] giving other Mennonites occasion to ridicule them." They were not allowed to hang pictures or wall mottos on their walls; these were burned. Even the pictures in Christian books were destroyed. Hofacker's *Sermons*, Arndt's *True Christianity* and many other books were burned as well [cf. #120], "an error of which this writer [Heinrich Epp] was also guilty." Unger and a few other brethren, however, did not go along. Since Gerhard Wieler was the originator of this view [in the Einlage congregation], we soon came to realize that we had been misled: the very thing that he had strenuously forbidden, he had himself done [while in St. Petersburg, he had himself photographed]. Despite all this, the number of believers grew and a sizeable number were added to the church.

§146 2. "The church at that time found itself on a slippery path. Unger alone continued to stand firm with a few families. When he realized that he could not accomplish anything, he resigned as a minister, an action he later came to regret." This state of affairs dragged on until the second holiday of Christmas, 1864. "At that point Neufeld and Gerhard Wieler flung an ultimatum at us, in these terms: 'Whoever takes sides with Unger, can no longer be brother to us.'" "As a result, several families were excommunicated, specifically, the father of G.W., Johann Wieler, and his sons Johann and Franz Wieler, Abraham Unger, Heinrich Epp [the writer of the "Reports"], Cornelius Hiebert, Jacob Koslowsky, Peter Berg. [These were joined by others and Unger's group soon formed the larger body.] The Neufeld-Wieler group seemed to "go from that point into uninhibited sound and fury." They read the Word of God selectively; taking, for instance,

Jeremiah 41:4 (should read 31:4): "And shall go forth in the dance of the merrymakers,"; and Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice." "Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy," Psalm 47:1. This was the manner in which they conducted their meetings [in quite the same manner we have seen earlier in the Molotschna]. "They did not allow any sermons, and yet they praised God and thanked Him." However, even this fell more and more by the wayside, and "eventually their meetings were little more than a time of entertainment; they played and danced until they were soaked with sweat." "Yet they were to have nothing to do with the excommunicated [of Unger's group] it was said. These "children of God" treated the excommunicated in exactly the same manner as the children of this world had earlier treated them. They obeyed the Scripture passage, "Salute no one on the road (Luke 10:4)" to the letter, with the result that many who felt close to the brethren were turned away. And finally at a church business meeting in Einlage, the two ministers [they called themselves apostles] Gerhard Wieler and Benjamin Becker pronounced the ban upon one another. Each wanted to be the greatest. [However, they were soon reconciled and continued to exercise their domination jointly.]

§147 3. The false teaching [of the "Exuberants"] was brought to us from the Molotschna brethren by G. Wieler and B. Becker, and from the Molotschna also came our help. It became clear to Brother Johann Claassen that the direction was quite wrong. Claassen came to Einlage and talked to the brethren in error, telling them that their path was not the right one. Since Claassen was a gifted and respected man, his words made a powerful impression upon these brethren. Yet, they could not immediately accept what he said and so a few of them drove to the Molotschna to ask advice of the brethren of their movement. These had, however, already confessed their errors. That left the "exuberants" of Einlage with little choice but to confess that they too were in the wrong. "We have done evil," they said. "Shame has been brought upon the people of God before the world!" [Merely before the "world?"!] The world exulted and said: "Did we not tell you?" The Minister Neufeld came to see that he had allowed himself to be misled by false brethren and that he had himself misled the church. [122] Thus, in the late summer and fall of the year 1865, the congregation came together to confess that the "frenzy and dancing" [and that rough treatment accorded dissenters and unbelievers] had been wrong, and decided to direct its steps onto another path.

[Brother G. Wieler was at that time again in prison in Ekaterinoslav, this time because of baptizing Russian people, and after his quick return was not in agreement with the new order of things. Compare above #126, June, 1865, Minutes, as well as #191, "Supplementary Documents."]

§148 4. During the time when the congregation lay so wretchedly prostrate, the government granted the brethren permission to establish a settlement in the Kuban region (March 4, 1864). Since the brethren in authority were unable to fellowship with the brethren of Unger's group, however, the latter were unwilling to make the move with them to the Kuban. Compare #176f, "Kuban."

§149 5. In 1864 there came into existence in Alt- and Neu-Danzig (Province of Kherson), a fellowship very closely related to the Mennonite Brethren within the Lutheran settlements. Persons from there seeking (the truth) had come to Einlage to buy wagons. (Abram Unger owned a large wagon-making enterprise.) These experienced an awakening here and entered into an intimate fellowship with the Einlage brethren, were baptized by them and, unfortunately, also picked up many of the errors of the Enthusiasts. Conversions also occurred in Alt- and Neu-Danzig as a result of visits by brethren from Einlage, who also baptized a number of them. Those so baptized formed a separate fellowship. Thereupon a very severe persecution occurred in the two colonies: seven brethren (Stulberg, Heringer, and others) were exiled from Russia, and the others were harshly threatened. The exiles went to Dobrud—then a Turkish, now a Rumanian—province. Through them there came into being the Katalui Baptist congregation, organized later by August Liebig. In Alt- and Neu-Danzig the first regular Baptist church in Southern Russia came into being in 1869 among new believers and those who had received only baptism by sprinkling through the work of J.G. Oncken. Their elders: Johann Pritzkau, Alt-Danzig, and Johann Kessler, Neu-Danzig.

XXIII.
CONTINUED ATTEMPTS BY LOCAL COUNCILS TO PORTRAY THE MEMBERS OF THE EINLAGE M.B. CHURCH AS POLITICAL AND CRIMINAL LAWBREAKERS

§150 1. That a new attempt (during the dark days of August, 1864) to portray the "brethren" as political and criminal lawbreakers was made, is established in the following documents:

1.

"Declarations concerning the articles of faith of the church of baptized Christians being brought into being in Southern Russia: a) from Inspector Tscherniavsky [of the Ekaterinoslav colonies], b) and from Johann Wieler on behalf of the believers. [Document extant in copy by Johann Wieler.]

a) "Because of an absence of intellectual enlightenment and writings, the Anabaptists have, through a reading of the Bible, become fanatical

dreamers, thinking of themselves as the chosen vessels of a higher revelation.

b) "We confess that through the reading of the Holy Scriptures—the only infallible guide for our lives—aside from which we need no other source of wisdom, I Cor. 1:21, 25; 2:1, 2; II Pet. 1:19; Matt. 11:25,—we have come to a knowledge of the eternal truth, that through the law against sin we have come to recognize our eternal death and through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ we have received redemption from all our sins, Rom. 8:3. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved, Rom. 10:10. And you have come to fulness of life in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority, Col. 2:10, and you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship . . . it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, Rom. 8:12-17; Phil. 2:15; Eph. 2:1-10; I Pet. 1:15, 16; 2:9, 10; Ps. 82:6.

a) "They consider themselves to be endued with the same spiritual gifts as the apostles at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as a consequence each member of the church baptizes, appoints elders and those who will baptize, and threatens the doubting with the terrors of hell.

b) "We confess that by grace we have received the same gifts, though we may not have been furnished with all the gifts given to the apostles. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, I Cor. 12:4-11. With this difference, as Jesus, in Matt. 25:14-30 said, the apostles were entrusted with more talents than we; but we earnestly strive to achieve the best gift, 'love,' (Cor. 13:1). Not everyone possesses every ministry, I Cor. 7:17; 12:28-30, rather everyone is to serve with the gift he has received 'as good stewards of God's varied grace,' Eph. 4:7; but only those who have been examined according to I Tim. 3 and are capable of teaching are placed into that service by the laying on of hands of the elders of the church. However, all who truly believe with unfeigned love are members of the body of Christ, each according to his part, I Cor. 12:27, Eph. 4:15, 16. Those who waver are warmly admonished, that they might increase in strength and be equipped for every good work.

a) "They consider their religion to be the new apostolic church and without exception take it to be the one true faith over against the official state religions.

b) "We strive to maintain the unity in the Spirit, not as the world decrees or teaches it, but according to Christ, Col. 2:8, so that we might be one body and spirit, since we were called to the one hope that belongs to our calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father (of us) all, who is above all and through all and in all, Eph. 4:3ff. Not every one who

says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven, they are his (Jesus') brothers, and sisters, and mother, Matt. 7:21; 12:50.

a) "They consider themselves to be without exception a Christian church, while others are all heathen.

b) "Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him, Rom. 8:9. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned, Mark 16:16. Only those are truly members of the church who through faith have become children of God.

a) "They consider themselves to be the only true Christians.

b) "And all who have obeyed the gospel . . . .

a) "They preach the imminent appearance of the kingdom of God.

b) "According to Matt. 4:17: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!

a) "They confess an equality among one another and a duty to call each other brethren and sisters, since it is their opinion that through a second baptism they have all become members of one fellowship, while all other ordinary obligations which existed until their baptism have been cancelled.

b) "Just as the Apostle Paul in his letter to Philemon sent the latter's fleeing servant Onesimus back to him with the request that he should receive him not as a slave but as a dear brother; and—as we see from God's Word—because the early Christians all addressed one another as brethren and sisters without any respect of persons; we follow the same rule. However, it is not through baptism alone that we become brethren, rather it is through faith in Christ that we become members of the body of Christ and like living stones (are) built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood,[123] I Pet. 2:5. The unconverted have no [spiritual!] fellowship with us. We do not separate married partners of whom only one belongs to the fellowship, I Cor. 7:10-13, unless the unbelieving one is unwilling to tolerate living with the believer, in which case we allow them to separate according to I Cor. 7:14, 15. And as much as the parents can come to an agreement, the children continue under the discipline of the parents.

a) "After their second baptism they consider themselves free from all sin and yield themselves openly to sensual indulgences.

b) "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life, Rom. 6:3, 4. God made us alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, Col. 2:13.

Through the Spirit of God we seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, putting away the sin which clings so closely and putting to death our earthly members through the setting aside of all evil desires: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, slander, foul talk, lies, etc., having put off the old nature with its practices, and having put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator, Col. 3:1-10. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality, Col. 3:25.

a) "Under persecution, the majority of the fanatics endure the heaviest curses without a murmur and they go to their death singing Psalms. This perseverance increases the number of those who believe. They are prepared for this by their worship services and sermons.

b) "Should persecution on the part of the believers be directed toward us on account of the Word of God, we will pray for our oppressors, Rom. 12:14, as Christ taught us, and endure persecution gladly,[124] Luke 6:22, 23. We consider this present momentary affliction not worthy of the glory which shall be revealed to us. We admonish one another accordingly, for example with the words of I Pet. 4:12-19.

2.

"Concerning Dogmas, Customs, Regulations, and Capital Punishment

a) "The Anabaptists reject infant baptism and insist that re-baptism is absolutely necessary for anyone wishing to join their sect. They declare themselves willing to baptize infants only in extreme cases, and then only on the condition that the child will be allowed to believe what he will later in life.

b) "Infant baptism runs counter to the dictates of God's Word, nor do we take into consideration any transmitted traditions. We simply rely on the Word of God, asking the candidates—as the apostles did before they baptized—whether or not they have faith and then baptize upon an affirmative response, as in the case of Philip the Ethiopian Eunuch, Acts 8:37-39. If some wish to suggest that the fact that the apostles baptized whole families is evidence for infant baptism, as, for example, Peter and the household of Cornelius, Acts 10, and Paul and the Philippian jailor's household, Acts 16, and other instances in which children may have been baptized, we will not allow ourselves to be entangled in such assumptions, acknowledging that children may well have been present; but these were obviously not too young to rejoice in God's grace—as the latter example suggests, while the first states that all possessed the Spirit of God which

came over Cornelius' household. Thus we too baptize children if they can give a living testimony to the grace of God in their hearts. Infants, however, are not baptized under any circumstances—nor do they require baptism at that stage—for Christ Himself has pronounced them blessed. Nor do we refer to our baptism as a rebaptism, for because the earlier baptism was not based upon faith, we now baptize upon the faith as the sign and covenant of a good conscience with God, I Peter 3:21. In Acts 19 Paul does not recognize John's baptism of the twelve men, but baptizes them again on the basis of a living faith in Christ. We remain true to the basic principle expressed by Christ when He spoke to His disciples just before His ascension: Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized, shall be saved, but whoever does not believe, shall be damned, Mark 16:16.

a) "They reject the belief in predestination according to the grace of God. [What is one to make of such a complaint?!]

b) "And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified, Rom. 8:27-30.

a) "They endeavor to build a church to suit their needs based entirely on the dictates of men.

b) "This has not been a point of discussion with us.

a) "They reject the idea that holy communion can be received only from the hands of the clergy. They claim to break communion bread according to the directives of the apostles.

b) "Holy communion is received and celebrated amongst us from the hand of our elected elders or ministers or anyone else who has been designated for this purpose, with the words and the manner which the Savior himself used and ordered, as Paul himself clearly teaches, I Cor. 11:23-32.

a) "At public receptions or banquets a new type of communion has been introduced: each guest is provided with bread and wine. They break the bread together, drink wine, and sing psalms.

b) "Except for what was described above, no other type of communion service is practiced in our church. Psalms are sung at our banquets in praise of God, according to Ephesians 5:10, etc.

a) "The distribution of the bread and the wine at the celebration of the communion service is accompanied with the words: Take, eat and drink and proclaim herewith the Lord's death!

b) "The celebration of the communion is done according to the words of our Lord Jesus as written in Luke 22:19-20: And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you.' And likewise the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'

a) "They confess their sins in a loud voice.

b) "This does not take place.

a) "A congregation commissions prophets with the words 'Peace be unto you,' to go by two's to preach and baptize.

b) "It is not known how many evangelists, who are found worthy to do the Lord's work, are sent out. However, when evangelists are commissioned, they are sent out with prayer, good wishes, and probably also with words such as 'Peace be unto you.'

a) "Once a week after the sermon there is dancing in the church.

b) "The worldly dance is considered sinful by us. Exceptionally, one or another may dance to express the great joy that has come to him through the grace of Christ—as David danced[125] for joy before the Ark of the Covenant without having taken dancing lessons, II Sam. 6:14.

a) "Heavy drinking is punishable with death; the same penalty also applies for such acts as the stealing of ice.

b) "No drunkards or thieves are allowed to be accepted into our fellowship. And if someone amongst us becomes intoxicated or steals and does not obey in spite of all the admonitions of the brethren, he is excommunicated from the brotherhood according to Ephesians 5:11, 17-18, and we have nothing more to do with such a person, I Cor. 5:11, so that he might be ashamed. According to the Gospels all capital punishment is forbidden; this also holds true for us. The Lord does not desire the death of the sinner but that he should be converted and live.

"Commandments of the Elders

a) "The respect given to the name of God.

b) "We shall not take the name of God in vain, for the Lord will not allow him to remain unpunished, who takes His name in vain, Exodus 20:7.

a) "The submission to the elders and the authorities of the church.

b) "Let the elders who rule well in the congregation be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching, I Tim. 5:17.

a) "The subjection of the wife to the husband and of all members of the household to the head of the family.

b) "According to Ephesians 5:22 wives shall be subject to their husbands as to the Lord; conversely, the husbands shall love their wives as Christ loved the church. Children shall obey their parents in all things, and servants are to give all due respect to their masters, I Tim. 6:1-2; Col. 3:18-22.

"Forbidden are the following:

a) "Fornication, covetousness, thievery, fraud, lying, perjury, filthy talk, quarreling, hate, discontent and treachery. Every infraction is punishable with death.

b) "We may no longer live according to the lusts of men, but rather according to the will of God; for it is enough that in the past we lived an unregenerate life, when we were subject to unchastity, diverse passions, drunkenness, gluttony, drinking to excess and idolatrous abominations, Eph. 4:22-23. Furthermore, we dictate death to no man, rather admonish everyone to be captivated by the love of the Lord Jesus and become children of God.

3.

"Concerning the Hostile Aspirations of all Established Religions, Civil Authorities, and Ruling Princes

a) "The Anabaptists reject the dogmas of all established religions as well as the faith in the Bible and believe only in a revelation of the Holy Spirit and maintain that everything they do is given them by the Spirit.

b) "All directives given by men are accursed, and even if an angel should preach them, if they are not in accord with the Word of God as the only source of light for our salvation, Gal. 1:6-12. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in accord with the Scriptures, will reveal what we shall or shall not do.

a) "The will of God shall be enforced with the sword.

b) "We believe that he who takes up the sword shall perish by the sword, Matt. 26:52.

a) "Civil authorities do not have the right to decide religious questions where the Holy Spirit gives directives.

b) "We are allowed to make people captives for the Lord Jesus only by use of the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, II Thess. 2:8. Our weapons are described in Ephesians 6:11-16. Spiritual matters must be decided spiritually and not according to the laws of men, I Cor. 2:13-14.

a) "They teach and believe that it is completely out of order for any civil power to take up the sword for the honor of Christ.

b) "———————————[thus in the Document].

a) "At investigations they laugh about secular involvements in religious matters.

b) "This does not happen.

a) "The ministers of this new sect term themselves prophets, baptizers, and apostles, preaching abstinence from all worldly pleasures and direct fellowship with God, for which, they claim, no clergyman is needed according to the Bible.

b) "We believe that God has chosen some to be apostles, some prophets (though none has as yet been designated thus amongst us), some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints to perform the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, etc., Eph. 4:11-14; I Cor. 12:7-12. We have fellowship with God because we know what He has given to us, I Cor. 2:10-12.

a) "They call the clergymen (priests) of all Christian confessions, who use the power of the state against the believers in their sect, lying prophets.

b) "We believe that anyone who does not conform to the doctrine of Christ, or who does not remain in that doctrine, has no faith in God, and whoever comes to us without that faith will not be recognized by us as coming from God, 2 John 9, 10.

a) "They preach insubordination to secular and ecclesiastical powers that make use of the sword and the oath.

b) "We teach our members and remind them that they are to be subject to all princes and civil authorities and to obey them, for they are God's servant for our good, to execute God's wrath on the evildoer, Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1-2; I Pet. 2:13-16. Since ecclesiastical authorities are not ordained to wield the sword, we do not recognize any who do. As to fulfilling the Word of God with respect to the state, we agree with Acts 4:19-20: Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard. We speak because we have faith.

a) "They state that a harvest is coming accompanied with the sword. God is calling on the faithful to do away with all other Christians, whom they consider unclean.

b) "The time will come when God shall judge the earth with justice,

when all scorners of the faith and the godless shall be consumed like straw, and all liars, fornicators, sorcerers, idolators, and all those who practice a life of falsehood shall find their portion to be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21:8; 22:15. And all that according to God's will.

a) "They shout loudly on the streets: Be converted, for the Day of the Lord is at hand, and give their personal testimonies.

b) "We teach that everyone is to let his light shine before men so that people might be saved from their evil ways and eternal damnation unto the living God, so that the day of reckoning might not come upon them unawares and without warning; for it is the will of God that all people should be brought to a knowledge of the truth.

a) "In their indignation they destroy the temple, and everything that was considered holy is broken, pulverised, or smashed.

b) "This is a fable.

a) "They secretly agree to curtail all contact with unbelievers and to act on the orders of their prophets. They teach that it is proper to destroy all unbelievers, and shout at them: The sword of God come upon you! The holy ones of this new faith hope that God will command them to destroy the ruling princes with fire and sword so they may take control of the affairs of state themselves.

b) "Sheer fable and utter falsehood: And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace, James 3:18.

4.

"Concerning Abstinence from Scholarship

a) "The Anabaptists insist that scientific knowledge and secular learning is basically false, and maintain that religious truth is discovered by trained prophets and baptizers, and endorsed by ordinary lay-preachers.

b) "We believe that the wisdom of men is folly with God, and is of no purpose in attaining His favor, I Cor. 3:19. However, we take pains to acquire as much useful information and secular training as possible, wherever we have opportunity to do so, in order that the preaching of the Gospel may be done with more power and ability, as was the case with Paul who was more learned than the other apostles, and who also achieved more. But our major efforts are directed toward mastering the lessons of the Holy Spirit. We pray that God may enlighten our minds through his Holy Spirit.

a) "They teach that God, through the prophets, has commanded that all books and publications other than the Bible are to be burned.

b) "Without consideration as to the author, we hold all books that are not written in the spirit of the Bible to be untruthful and therefore harmful, and that is why such books are not tolerated among us. For we have a firm prophetic word. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, II Pet. 1:19; Psalm 119:105.

a) "Children of both sexes are to learn the Anabaptist doctrines and the Psalms together.

b) "We have not set any hard and fast dogmas [126] for ourselves, nor can we teach them. On the other hand, children are brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and are encouraged to learn the Scriptures well. In II Tim. 3:15-17 Paul writes to Timothy: And that from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work, II Pet. 1:19-21; Rom. 5:4; I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:21.

5.

"Concerning the Renunciation of Property for the Sake of the Poor

a) "The Anabaptists maintain that, according to God's will, they are to hold all goods in common. They demand that the wealthy distribute their property amongst the poor.

b) "A community of goods has not been introduced amongst us, nor do we consider such a scheme to be helpful under the present circumstances; nevertheless, we do support each other financially if someone is in need and is suffering, for that is but practicing a Christian duty, so that each may serve with whatever gift God has blessed him, and freely give according to his pleasure, for God loves a cheerful giver, II Cor. 9:6-9.

a) "All property is considered common and is distributed in the congregation according to need. If anyone is unwilling to submit to this, it is decided either to hang or behead him. All valuables are forcefully confiscated for the benefit of the group. The renunciation of all property is required. And dissatisfaction with this procedure is punishable with death. Whoever has more clothing than necessary must share his surplus with the poor.

b) "– – – – – – – – – – –

6.

"Concerning the Sensual Aberration in Polygamy and Within the Marriage Bond

a) "The Anabaptists permit themselves all kinds of sensual irregularities and practices which are against chastity.

b) "We flee from the company of the unfruitful works of darkness and vigorously condemn all those who walk in the lusts of the flesh and the passions of the world, for we who formerly served the flesh in its lusts are very careful now to put aside everything that is contrary to the Spirit of God. Because Christ died for those very sins, we are concerned to live a life pleasing to God, Eph. 5:8-11.

a) "They proclaim the justness of polygamy.

b) "Just as God in the beginning created one man and one woman, according to the same order we have no right to more than one wife. We teach our members to live with their wives as though they did not have them, rather than encourage them to have several wives, which is sinful and worthy of condemnation.

a) "The wives have to subordinate themselves to the despotism of their husbands, and are threatened with death if they are dissatisfied with their lot.

b) "The manner in which husbands and wives are to live together has been indicated above. No one amongst us is ever threatened with death; on the contrary, there are many evidences of Christian love, unity, and patience. [That is indeed the ideal!]

a) "Individuals who are about to be married must keep a prayer vigil for three days, after which the marriage is contracted with a simple mutual acceptance in the presence of witnesses.

b) "We know of no directive from the Word of God commanding three days of prayer before marriage. If, on occasion, we practice a vigil of this sort, it is not considered a firm dogma, but rather an expression of a personal desire. Even so, we are admonished in the Scriptures to pray without ceasing. The solemnizing of the marriage vows occurs by mutual agreement, with the blessing of the parents, the church, and a minister, after the pattern of Abraham the Patriarch.

"Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory (I Timothy 3:16). Ekaterinoslav, August 4, 1865."

§151 2. We have reproduced this entire, ridiculous and odious document (the Accusations) word for word in all its length and breadth. It is at once both interesting and boring, both stupid and contradictory as well as fiendishly sly. There has never been a case in which theological and judicial expertise appeared more ridiculous. We shall not attempt to unearth the sources of the theological position nor determine who is responsible for the pulpit-like presentation. It is sufficient to realize that the accusations were in fact made, and were seriously considered at one time by the high officials concerned. It is immediately obvious with what kind of external opposition the members of the Einlage congregation had to deal, while at the same time suffering internally from the unfettered emotionalism, spiritual egotism and despotism of several leading brethren, whose unwholesome excesses were skillfully woven here and there into the accusations. As we know from various witnesses and from certain contemporaries of his, Johann Wieler, then a young man of 25 years, had to write his replies to the accusations at one sitting, and presented them to Inspector Tscherniavsky in the presence of various officials—certainly a remarkable achievement by the help of God under difficult circumstances! We know from a letter (in a draft of the cited "black" document) of Wieler to Brun as well as from oral conversations and other statements, that the answers given by Wieler in the name of the "brethren" were presented to Brun,[127] the agent of the General Consistory of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church. ". . . The very same Privy Councillor Brun of Ekaterinoslav,[128] who had been commissioned by the Minister of the Interior to investigate our case, and who, in response to my earlier declarations, which I had handed to him in Ekaterinoslav in the fall, had defended us to the utmost of his ability,[129] now, when I at his request told him the whole story, became deeply disturbed, saddened and dismayed that the high hopes and good faith which he had placed in my testimony as evidence that we might prove to be a good foundation for the long-awaited Russian Reformation[?!] had now been destroyed by G.W. How all this affected me you can scarcely imagine. For this kind gentleman was so benevolently disposed towards all of us that we could not have wished for a better or more influential patron . . ." [Wieler fears that Brun, to the great detriment of the cause of the brethren] "will have to withdraw his earlier defence . . . ." In the late summer of the same year (1865) Privy Councillor Brun was somewhat soothed, through the verbal communications of Philipp Isaak and Christian Schmidt, to hear that victory over the excesses of the exuberant movement had been achieved by the grace of God. Cf. the "Personal Testimony" of the M.B. Church presented to p. p. Brun in Sept., 1865, by Christian Schmidt and Jacob Janz under #195.

The M.B. Church can thank God for this noble protector, and bless his memory.

XXIV.
THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION AND GROWTH OF THE EINLAGE M.B. CHURCH TO 1864

§152 1. The "other way" which the M.B. Church at Einlage decided to follow after the reconciliation of the two camps as a consequence of the "June Reforms" of 1865 was a good way, but it was not to be an easy road. The excesses of the "exuberant movement" were discarded once and for all. To reach a unified and creative leadership, however, was most difficult. "Not everyone was disposed to accept Neufeld [130] again as minister" [Epp]. The majority finally agreed to select a new minister by vote; but some were hesitant to do so, fearing that it was still too soon, "for the congregation was not yet on a good footing." Nevertheless, the majority wished to vote. Br. Unger also consented to the election, on the condition that after the election the candidate would be tested according to I Tim. 3:7. Then the vote was taken, with some abstentions. Neufeld was elected and was then to be examined, but this was now denied. It was now asserted that "the voice of the church is the voice of God." Because Neufeld was a popular man with a very friendly manner [besides being rather imposing and handsome, with a natural flair for public speaking], "the brethren decided to ignore his tendency to waver at times, and did not heed the Word in I Tim. 3:7." In the end it was decided to cast lots, to which they responded that "Neufeld's case should not be decided by lot because that would be against the Word of God." However, no attention was given to that idea, but they attempted once more to discern God's will by lot and again Neufeld was chosen. [131] At this point attention was drawn to Numbers 22:19-36 [the story of Balaam], but it too went unheeded. "Thereupon Neufeld threw himself upon the floor in the midst of the brethren and wept bitterly. He believed he had received his lot [office] from the Lord; the brethren [who disagreed with him], however, maintained he had received it from men." [Compare this with footnote to #201; "Correction".] After a considerable period of friction, Br. Neufeld left the District of Chortitza and moved to the city of Stavropol in the vicinity of the Kuban settlement [which was once again brought to a state of turmoil for a time by him, partially in the company of Johann Friesen of Gnadenheim and other adherents of the excesses of 1864/1865]. The departure of Br. Heinrich Neufeld occurred in the winter of 1865-1866. Two ministers were now elected on a temporary basis: Br. Peter Friesen of Chortitza [d. in Wiesenfeld] and Br. Aron Lepp [later an elder in Andreasfeld]. These men both tried to do

their best in the Kingdom of God, and attempted to bring order into the congregation on account of which [by one group] they were considered legalistic and pharisaical. In the midst of these troubles Br. Unger looked to Hamburg once again.

§153 2. Help from the Anabaptists of the Hamburg Confession: the first visit of Brother August Liebig. As we know [H. Epp], Br. Unger was in correspondence with the brethren from Hamburg. These people knew, therefore, that there was still no organized church in the District of Chortitza. As late as 1865 Br. Unger had suggested that several brethren write to Hamburg requesting that a minister be sent to help organize the church. The following brethren signed that request: Abraham Unger, Cornelius Unger, Cornelius Fast, Johann Neufeld, Johann Loewen, Hermann Born, Heinrich Epp [the "reporter"] and Johann Epp.[132] "These men desired that the congregation be established on a secure foundation," which up to that time had not been the case. In the spring of 1866, Minister August Liebig arrived [cf. above "Old- and Neu-Danzig,"—Katalui in the Dobrudscha]. "God is a God of order. But Br. Liebig found conflict and confusion in our church." He began with an address on Sunday, which the brothers and sisters found "very fine, serious, and engaging." Following this a "congregational meeting" [brotherhood counsel] was arranged. Minister Liebig was asked to chair the meeting. He immediately asked that someone be delegated to take minutes of the proceedings—which was quite unknown to some brethren. Hearing this, the chairman delivered "a very gentle lesson on the questionable usefulness of a church meeting when nothing is recorded." Many brethren found that quite enlightening! So they followed his advice. The most eloquent brethren spoke up; even before one had finished, he was interrupted by another. They all remained seated while speaking. At this the chairman interrupted the meeting with the words, "Brethren, this is certainly not the way we do it. God is a God of order. He who wishes to speak must rise to his feet and address the whole assembly, one after the other. A speaker should not speak more than three times to the same point, so that the consensus of the group can emerge." Many felt this latter comment to be enlightening, except those brethren "who were used to making weighty statements and insisted on their rights." Nevertheless, the good work that Br. Liebig was doing did not last too long on this occasion. He had only been amongst the brethren for two weeks when the local Mennonite authorities noticed that "he was unifying the scattered children of God." He was arrested by the Area Administrative Office of Chortitza and taken to Ekaterinoslav; from there he was sent to Odessa and thence across the border. "So there we stood without a leader once again. However, his visit had been a great blessing to all of us." (Epp.)

3. With the departure of Br. Heinrich Neufeld from the Einlage congregation and Br. August Liebig's first visit, the first developmental period for the congregation closes and the second begins—in essence in accordance with the views of Abraham Unger, though not without considerable opposition from a number of brethren.

§154 NB! In the history of the Mennonite Brotherhood of South Russia there are three occasions on which restitutionist Mennonite groups turned to spiritually related confessional comrades of other churches for help in their own church matters: 1) The Brenckenhofswalde Church of Gnadenfeld, while still in Prussia, requested protection and guidance for their private meetings, etc., from the Moravian Brethren (see above #47); 2) the M.B. Church turned to the Baptist Brotherhood Church in Hamburg; and 3) the Brotherhood in South Russia, as the largest (Mennonite) group, made a request to the Mission Society of the Rhineland for a missionary (in the person of Br. Irle—Dutch Reformed) to fill the vacant post at the "Pakanten" mission station in Sumatra after Missionary Dirks left and before Missionary Nickel began his services. And all three groups acted in the manner of a healthy, unprejudiced alliance, for their own real benefit.

XXV.
DOCUMENTARY SUPPLEMENTS TO THE HISTORY OF THE SOUTH RUSSIAN MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD AND SPECIFICALLY OF THE M.B. CHURCH TO 1866

§155 We present these supplementary documents essentially for the years 1860 to 1866 (even though here and there some of them reach back to before 1860, while others go beyond 1866), that is for the first, early years of the M.B. Church. With the "June Reforms" of 1865 and the departure of the advocates of the exuberant movement, and all that was connected with it, under the leadership of Hermann Peters in the winter of 1865/1866, who were dissatisfied with this reform, the Molotschna congregation was finally and forever healed from the more gross expressions of its "false movement,"[133] its despicable childhood illness. The same thing was accomplished in the Einlage congregation by those same "June Reforms" of 1865, Heinrich Neufeld's departure and the first period of August Liebig's activity in those same years of 1865/66. The Kuban congregation, consisting of emigrants from the two above-named Mennonite Brethren congregations, had joined those same "June Reforms" of 1865 in principle (in spite of the fact that it was still repeatedly shaken by the aftershocks of the early years, since many of the most extreme elements of the two mother congregations had settled

in the new colony). At the same time, 1866 is of particular importance for the Kuban congregation because of the final solemn confirmation of their Mennonite ecclesiastical and civil rights by the Caucasian authorities on the order of His Imperial Highness, the Grand Duke and Governor, of May 30 of the same year under No. 2746 on Johann Claassen's name as the representative of the settlers.

A. *Documents Relating Principally to the Events in the Molotschna*

§156 1. Johann Claassen's first journey to St. Petersburg on behalf of the M.B. Church (supplement to #94). Taken from his letter of April 19, 1864, to the Kuban congregation written from Tiflis: ". . . On March 27, 1860, Br. Huebert and I drove to Halbstadt in order to confer with Elder Harder regarding our concerns. But we soon saw that there was little hope of help for us. On our return journey, just as the sun was about to set, I pondered our situation: if the authorities would not protect us . . . we already knew what we could expect from the Mennonite congregations. I was absorbed in my thoughts. Br. Huebert said to me: 'You are so quiet!' I answered: 'If we want to do something, then this is the time.'[134] (Wednesday the Area Administrative Office would write and summon me, I thought to myself, and then it would be too late.) When I reached home, I told Cornelius Reimer [his brother-in-law and business partner]: 'I am setting out on a journey to the north, but do not ask me where to.' I continued: 'Is money for travelling available?' Cornelius answered: 'Yes'—and the matter was settled. I said the same thing to my wife, and she, too, did not enquire any further, although she was not yet out of childbed . . . . This, dear brethren and sisters, interests me and most likely also my wife, because the time of our separation began at this point. ———————————

"On March 28 we quietly prepared for the trip; the house servants may well have noticed something, but did not know what it was all about. On Tuesday, the 29th of March, 2 o'clock at night the horse was saddled; everybody slept. When I had completed this, I went to my wife and prayed with her . . . and then I left. Cornelius Reimer accompanied me to the river [the Tokmatschka, behind his garden]; then we took leave of each other. I mounted my horse, which we had led out through the garden. My brother-in-law wished me good luck, and so I left for Kharkov." In a letter to his wife, Claassen wrote: "St Petersburg, April 26, 1860. Beloved Katharina! First, I wish you the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . 8 days I resided in Kharkov, because the rivers between Kharkov and Moscow were just in the process of breaking up. . . . From Kharkov . . . by post to Moscow [from there—railway]. On the way I visited the [widowed] wife of Pastor Landesen in Tula. She was

extraordinarily happy to see me. I only spent 2½ hours with her . . . . She also understands our language. . . . Arrived safely in St. Petersburg at night, the 21st. . . ." The same in a letter of April 19, 1866. ". . . .May 25 [1860] I was already home, but exactly when I arrived I do not know." [His original account concerning travel expenses is dated: "from March 29 to May 23."]

2. First list for the election of ministers in the M.B. Church (cf. #95). §157

"Election List
of two of the members who seceded from numerous
congregations, May 30, 1860."

(This title, written by the late Elder Heinrich Huebert, is crossed out and on the second half of the page the following title is given by the late Br. Johann Claassen):

"Election List
of the M.B. Church in the Molotschna Mennonite Colony, concerning four of the nominated brethren, of whom two are to be elected by majority vote to be our ministers; this took place in Gnadenfeld, May 30, 1860.[135]

Village	Name of Voter	Jakob Becker	Heinrich Huebert	August Strauss	Andreas Voth
Lichtfelde	Martin Klassen	—	1	—	1
"	Abraham Wiens	1	1	—	—
"	(Jacob Kroeker)[136]	—	—	—	—
Elisabethtal	Franz Klassen	1	—	—	1
"	Kornelius Wiens	1	1	—	—
"	Abraham Wiens	1	1	—	—
Schardau	August Strauss	—	1	—	1
"	Daniel Hoppe	—	1	—	1
"	Heinrich Flaming	—	1	—	1
Mariental	Dietrich Claassen	1	1	—	—
Pastva	Isaak Regier	—	1	—	1
Rudnerweide	Abraham Regier	—	1	1	—
"	Jacob Becker	—	1	—	1
"	Benjamin Becker	—	1	—	1

Gnadenfeld	Jakob Reimer	—	1	—	1
"	Bernhard Penner, the younger	1	1	—	—
"	Heinrich Bartel	—	1	—	1
Waldheim	Gottlieb Strauss	1	1	—	—
"	Johann Strauss	1	1	—	—
"	Friedrich Strauss	1	1	—	—
"	David Dirksen	1	1	—	—
Wernersdorf	Johann Huebert	1	1	—	—
Liebenau	Heinrich Huebert	1	—	1	—
"	Simon Harms	1	1	—	—
Fuerstenau	Peter Stobb	1	—	—	1
Ladekopp	Abraham Peters	—	1	1	—
"	David Claassen	1	1	—	—
Pastva	Andreas Voth	1	1	—	—
		16	24	3	11

§158 3. Johann Claassen's second journey to St. Petersburg on behalf of the M.B. Church. (Supplement to #98.) a) Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld's "Report": ". . . When we returned to Halbstadt for the second time on October 30, thirty of us came together . . . . Finally, when our turn came, we were all earnestly advised to return to the church, which we, however, absolutely refused to do. Thereupon we were severely threatened, especially by the spokesmen: if, within two months, we had not joined one or the other congregations we were to be excluded from the status of a colonist. Since the threats became more and more serious and most of the congregations had consented—in response to the Area Administrative Office's call to the elders to confer with their congregations in order to gain their consent to exclude us from the status of colonist—we were forced to seek further counsel. . . ."

b) Johann Claassen, letter of April 19, 1866. ". . . On October 31, 1860, I, together with Br. Forchhammer, set off by post for St. Petersburg from Liebenau by way of Berdiansk. . . ."

c) Otto Forchhammer: "Moscow, November 18, 1860. Beloved brethren! Hallelujah, Christ! even in Moscow and all the world. Ebenezer! Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. On the day on which we took our leave from the beloved Wilhelm Bartel, we travelled beyond Mariopol, but had the misfortune to tip the wagon enroute in the darkness, whereby a hoop of the wagon hood was damaged [of Claassen's own covered buggy which then had to be left in Moscow and sold]. The

journey from Mariopol to Bachmut was a miserable one, for no horses could be acquired at any of the stations, and we usually had to pay double or triple the price. . . . When we arrived in Kharkov one late evening, we were able to continue without delay, which pleased Claassen very much since he feared that he would be pursued [!] . . . . Claassen sent a telegraph in Oriol, and when we arrived in Tula, we remained two days. Pastor Landesen's wife was overjoyed to see us and quartered us with her children, to whom we seemed to be most welcome and with whom the Lord granted us many a lovely conversation . . . . On our further journey to Moscow we had the misfortune to tip once more, but happily nothing serious happened . . . . Once more we are bidden: 'Tomorrow we depart, good-bye, good-bye'—to wit on the railway to St. Petersburg . . . . Otto Forchhammer."

d) Johann Claassen, letter of April 19,1866: ". . . On Sunday, November 20, 1860, we arrived in St. Petersburg and took lodging with a Baptist brother named Plonus. The time spent in St. Petersburg was a real test of my patience; the dear Lord taught me, and you too there in Molotschna, to exercise patience and rely on His help . . . ."

4. Johann Claassen's most humble petition to His Majesty the Tsar. (Supplement to #98.) The copy in our possession is in German translation with a note in Claassen's hand: "On Monday, May 21, 1862, I delivered the petition, in the Russian language, to an aide-de-camp of the emperor in Zarskoie Selo." Our document reads as follows: §159

"Most serene Emperor!
Most gracious Lord!

a) "With hope and devotion the undersigned humbly undertakes to petition you, our Emperor, for protection in a matter whose undoubted righteousness on the one hand, as well as the shameful misuse of authority, intentional perversion of truth, persecution, mistreatment, etc., on the other hand, can be clearly seen from the accompanying *Promemoria.*

b) "Briefly, the matter is as follows: a number (ca. 50)[137] of Molotschna Mennonites of the Province of Taurida, District of Berdiansk, on Jan. 6, 1860, after they had recognized the moral decay that had entered the church as well as the private lives of their fellow believers, decided to form an independent church in accordance with their convictions in the sense of true and strict disciples of the teaching of the Gospel and their original teacher, Menno Simons.

c) "As guidelines they used the same right attested to both by the Gospel and Menno's teaching, as was used earlier and repeatedly in the similar instances in the Molotschna Mennonite congregations, such as

the Lichtenauer, and so-called 'Kleine' Gemeinde, which are recognized to this day and serve as examples. In spite of this, the church elders, to whom the formation of a new church appeared to be an act threatening their authority, persuaded the local authorities to initiate such oppressive and persecutive measures that the newly established church was not only doomed to complete economic ruin, but also daily lost more and more civil rights and privileges. These actions involuntarily call to mind the days of the fanatical inquisition in the Middle Ages.

d) "The Supervisory Commission for the welfare of foreign settlers in South Russia, although it received complaints regarding the above-mentioned grievances, has, until the present, neglected to limit the arbitrariness of the Area Administrative Office, rather it has strengthened it in its arbitrary actions through its decrees as well as and especially in that the numerous orders of the Ministry of Crown Lands—consequent to the complaints of the undersigned for an explanation of the matter at hand—have remained unanswered by the Supervisory Commission for nearly a full year.

e) "Although the last-mentioned circumstance of itself may already serve as proof of the unjust handling of this matter on the part of the entire colonial administration, it nevertheless still follows that the refusal of the Supervisory Commission to submit the required explanations deprives the Ministry of Crown Lands of the possibility of taking appropriate measures for the protection of the new Mennonite church, so that complete ruin continues to threaten people whose hearts are faithfully devoted to their faith, emperor and fatherland. (People who only and solely plead to be allowed to strive, in word and deed, in church, family and fellowship, amid their other fellow believers, to call to life anew the virtues of their forefathers that are disappearing among their descendants, or, in extreme emergency, to practice this their life purpose by resettling on crown or other purchased territories.) [This bracketed passage is crossed out with a pencil in our copy.]

f) "Most gracious Emperor! Incline your ear to the humble complaint of your faithful children, who, next to God, seek their aid from you: their petition is that they be granted a just protection in the practice of their evangelical worship and that they thereby be spared from all further persecution by local authorities and that they be assured legal freedom in the practice of their ecclesiastical and civil rights. The original is signed: Mennonite Johann Claassen, Liebenau Colony, Taurida Province, Berdiansk District, Molotschna Mennonite District. St. Petersburg, May 15, 1862, 36 Galeeren Street, House of Domontovitsch, Room F.

g) *Promemoria*

"Regarding the persecutions and oppressions in matters of faith,

which a part of the Mennonites at the Molotschna, Province of Taurida, District of Berdiansk, have suffered.

h) "The Mennonites of the Molotschna . . . to . . . 'exist to this day' [cf. above *#105*].

i) "The state of affairs. In recent years, the Lord through His Spirit aroused in many souls a desire earnestly to seek their redemption: they began diligently to read in the Bible. This reading of Holy Scripture aroused in many the wish to pattern their faith and life in accordance with it, and at the same time revealed to us the present religious decadence in our church, so that little of the truly evangelical disposition, to which the Mennonite name owes its good reputation, could be found. At the same time we recognized with amazement and regret, that our church life had deteriorated to dead forms, while, with regard to church discipline, an indulgence toward public vices was practiced which our doctrines do not permit. More and more, this became a subject that was often discussed by the seriously-minded, and all recognized with clarity and certainty that this condition in our churches did not correspond either with the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, nor with the ordinances of Menno Simons.

k) "A further natural consequence of this appeared on January 6, 1860, when a number of Mennonites from various Molotschna congregations, at first 27 in number [the 9 members (men) from Gnadenfeld, Reimer and others, who first expressed their consent to such a move on January 18, are obviously added to the original 18], resolved to organize an independent church and set themselves the obligation of reestablishing the earlier moral purity and the true spirit of faith in the church and in private life among the rest of their Mennonite comrades. After the election of ministers[138] had taken place, the new congregation immediately informed the elders of the other congregations and explained the reasons for this decision. Unfortunately the majority of the elders, after declaring this act to have undermined their authority, resolved to oppose the recognition of the new group as an independent fellowship with all the powers at their disposal, the more so since the latter, as the expression of a moral and spiritual need already felt by many for some time, attracted more and more participation and like-minded people.

l) "After feeble and naturally futile attempts to dissuade the new fellowship from their intentions, the church elders decided, on January 18, 1860, to ban these people from the church and transfer further responsibility to the Area Administrative Office. Of and by itself this church ban, as a right granted by the Gospel and Menno Simon's teachings to every church for its self-governance, could give the newly

organized fellowship no reason for complaint, especially since the brethren of this fellowship had already publicly seceded from their former churches, had not the local authorities, as a result of this ban, declared the brethren ineligible for various civil rights guaranteed by the law of the realm. Thus, under threat of the church ban, all intercourse with the banned was forbidden, not only in regard to religious fellowship, but even in regard to purely secular matters such as: buying, selling, the making of contracts, services, community living, etc. The natural consequences thereof were: a) the complete standstill in farming, industry and business of those banned, whose debtors even believed themselves justified in stopping payments, and b) the denial of the right to pursue their businesses outside the colonies through a custom existing in the Mennonite colonies, though not accepted by imperial law, that visas or passports are issued only upon receipt of a so-called ecclesiastical certification issued by the church elders concerned, which is naturally not granted to the banned, and when issued by their church, is not recognized.

m) "The ruin arising for the newly-formed church from such an application of the church ban is evident, and in this regard it is sufficient evidence to mention the Mennonite Isaak Matthies, whose sizeable business, according to receipts (ca. 15,000 silver rubles annual turnover) was not only totally boycotted, but, at the discretion of the local administration, a part of his assets were also sold at public auction to satisfy several of his creditors, while various Mennonites, who owed Matthies some 30,000 silver rubles, stopped payment[139] (because Matthies was banned), and the municipal court left without consideration Matthies' request to demand payment of at least part of this debt to avert the sale of his property. In precisely the same manner regarding the property of each one, all the remaining brethren in the new church are condemned to complete bankruptcy. But soon another type of persecution was added to all this heartache on the part of the police, i.e. the local Area Administrative Office,—persecutions, which involuntarily call to mind the fanatical religious hatred and Inquisition of the Middle Ages. Endless summons and hearings in the Area Administrative Office, threats, imprisonments, hunger and hard labor sentences, etc., were and are the order of the day. The following facts offer proof thereof:

n) "I. The Circular of the Molotschna Mennonite Area Administrative Office, which began to make the rounds in February of 1860:

"In accordance with the order of the Area Administrative Office, the owners of farms,[140] landless owners of homes[141] and renters[142] are hereby informed that a few members of the Molotschna Mennonite congregations have had the impudence to celebrate holy communion amongst themselves in the colony of Elizabethtal. And in spite of the

admonitions directed toward them, they did not want to relinquish their erroneous opinions; rather, they have much more severed themselves in writing from their respective congregations in order to establish a separate church, and have held many meetings amongst themselves. Thus the Area Administrative Office finds itself compelled, on the basis of article 362 of the penal code, promulgated in 1857, to take action. The article reads:

"The founders and heads of secret [!] societies, which, although they may not have subversive objectives, are nevertheless forbidden by specific governmental orders and decrees, are subject to imprisonment for a period of six months to one year. The members of such a society, if they knew of the decrees forbidding them, are subject to imprisonment for a period of seven days to three weeks." [Something seems to be missing here in our copy.]

"The village mayoral offices are hereby most strictly ordered to supervise this matter most closely in order to make sure that no meetings of a religious nature take place in private houses amongst the above-named or other members. The mayoral offices are obliged to bring this to everyone's attention and have the responsibility to turn over without delay any transgressors of this order, as well as the owners in whose houses such meetings may take place, to the Area Administrative Office for further disposal in this matter" [January 27, 1860].

o) "II. The Inquiry of the Colonial Inspector of March 1, 1860, sub No. 293.

"At the same time, as a consequence of the questions to be answered by the Area Administrative Office with regard to the brotherhood in question and prescribed by the honorable colonial inspector, the Area Administrative Office, in the spirit of the above circular, informs those authorities next in line. (Word for word):

"1. What are the essential characteristics of the movement? 2. What kind of detrimental consequences could result for the Mennonite brotherhood from it, and 3. What kind of steps will have to be taken in order to bring about the dissolution of this society and whether or not it is necessary to deal with the founders as disturbers of the general peace and order, i.e., that after they have been captured, they be excluded from the status of colonist as a corrective measure, if the congregations give their consent to this."

p) "In response to the Area Administrative Office's request, the following made their declaration:

"III. The church elders (with the exception of Johann Harder) on March 11:

q) "1. The position . . . as to have totally become the slave of the devil." [Cf. above #89.]

r) "IV. The church elder, Johann Harder, on March 25 and 29, 1860." [Cf. above #92-93.]

s) "The result thereof. The voice of the honest Elder Harder naturally found no hearing with the other elders, so that the municipal court soon proceeded with mistreatment and violence for the purpose of therewith moving the newly formed church to retreat into the old church groups. To correctly characterize the Area Administrative Office's manner of action it seems sufficient to cite the mistreatment suffered by Mennonites Johann Regier, Gerhard [?] Wall and Abraham Cornelssen solely as a consequence of the fact that they had not given a declaration required by the Area Administrative Office that they would return to their previous congregations. They were placed under arrest by the Area Administrative Office and detained in the cellar on a diet of bread and water—Regier two-and-a-half weeks, until he, in order to avoid further punishment, gave the required signature, but then, gripped by remorse, immediately recanted [small honor!]; and Wall, at first fourteen days detention followed by ten days of heavy work in the community, until he finally became ill because of hunger, work and incarceration and had to spend another three days in the cellar. Only then, when his condition became critical was he released, and that in spite of his remaining true to his convictions. Nevertheless, he was forced to leave the colony. Finally, Cornelssen, a generally respected teacher and father of a large family, was removed from his position in the dead of winter and forced to leave his [official] residence so that he had to spend a considerable period of time on the Nogai steppes in a [sod] hut, became ill together with his family and finally settled in a nearby Nogai village. And yet, in spite of the fact that the Area Administrative Office did not wish to tolerate these people in the colonies, they still refused them the necessary passes which would have allowed them to reside outside the colonial district.

t) "As a consequence of the reports of the colonial inspector and the Area Administrative Office, the Supervisory Commission requested an explanation from the latter.

"V. The Questions of the Supervisory Commission for the Welfare of Foreign Settlers in South Russia. Nov. 29, 1860, No. 8575 [cf. above #99].

u) "In reaction thereto, the new church, in a petition to the Supervisory Commission, dated Dec. 27, 1860, explained its true aspirations as well as the untruthful and ill-intended character of the reports of the Area Administrative Office, and concluded with the most humble plea that the brethren, as the true followers of Menno Simons, be

protected against further persecution as well as allowed the free practice of their faith according to their convictions. The petition remained unanswered.

v) "From the above-mentioned it may be clearly seen how the Area Administrative Office is positively and truthfully refuted. Already bound by its February circular regarding the church, it could report nothing more to the authorities without contradicting itself, than the voice of the majority of the elders. Their explanation of itself clearly and sharply outlines the harmless and lawful efforts of the new brotherhood, as well as the total impossibility of proving any harmful, evil and state-forbidden tendencies or ceremonies. Finally, the explanation of Elder Harder positively and truthfully refutes it as well.

w) "The new church, which had grown to 50 members [heads of families] during this time of persecution, had already come to the conviction that, in the face of similar examples from earlier times and the above-described facts, it could not hope for a just solution to this battle of faith, either from the elders, who disregarded their manifold peace proposals as well as the plea for free exit from the colonial territory, nor from the Area Administrative Office, whose participation in the case consisted only of persecutions and violence, nor finally from the colonial inspector or the Supervisory Commission, which had expressed such enmity toward the new church. Such sad circumstances could only challenge the brethren of the new church to think of ways and means to escape from this highly oppressive situation, which was undermining their welfare, in as peaceable a manner as possible. The oppressive worry about the further well-being of the brotherhood weighed heavily on their hearts. Even then, the brethren still did not complain to the highest authorities, whose only and almighty protection, next to God, they trusted, in order not to damage the traditional good reputation of the Mennonites in any way. Instead they decided to achieve the freedom of conscience now threatened and the peaceful enjoyment of the rights and privileges of all Mennonites by resettling on free crown territories or on land purchased from private parties. With this assignment the Mennonite Johann Claassen of Liebenau was sent to St. Petersburg in the name of the brethren in November 1860, since he alone had that possibility thanks to his possession of an as yet unexpired annual visa.

x) "Since that time Claassen has lived in St. Petersburg, for which he initially received the necessary visitor's permit not from the Area Administrative Office, which flatly denied the issuance of a new visa, but from the St. Petersburg police department. Not until the spring of 1861 did Claassen enter negotiations for a tract of 3500 dessiatines in the Crimean peninsula; whereupon he sent the brethren a map of that tract

and letters dated May 1, 1861: from the Area Administrative Office he requested deputization, enclosed various letters to some brethren and finally his expired visa, with the petition to forward him a new passport to St. Petersburg through his relatives, and the deputization and letter to the proper persons. In these letters Claassen asked the brethren, after they had viewed the prospective purchase in the Crimea, to send him their final decision and conditions regarding the purchase of the same, as well as sending in an authorization for closing the contract and representing their case to the authorities. As earlier, so now the Area Administrative Office denied not only the issuance of visas for Claassen and the brethren who had been delegated to view the tract in the Crimea, but also refused even the certification of the deputization, and in order to delay the matter as long as possible, transferred responsibility for the decision in the matter to the Supervisory Commission.

y) "Because section 166, of the Colonial Law, Vol. VII, allows colonists to purchase inherited and owned land for the improvement and expansion of their operations, and because according to section 424 and 425 of the same Colonial Law Claassen and his associates in no way belong to the category of those whom the issuance of visas may be denied, and since the Area Administrative Office wilfully denies these persons their colonial rights, and, contrary to section 120, attempts to coerce their consciences, Claassen complained about these circumstances in a petition of June 9, 1861, to the Lord Minister of Crown Lands, asking His Excellency to command the Area Administrative Office to issue him, Claassen, and those brethren planning to travel to the Crimea, the desired visas, as well as properly certifying the deputization for closing the contract. The ministry promptly issued the corresponding order to the Supervisory Commission, at the same time demanding an explanation regarding Claassen's complaint.

z) "In hopes of an answer from the Supervisory Commission along with a visa and deputization, as well as the hoped-for decision of the minister following therefrom, Claassen, in compliance with the expressed wish of the brethren, remained in St. Petersburg, where on orders of the ministry, he was supplied with the necessary residence permits through the office of Crown Lands. Although the ministry repeatedly pressed for the fulfillment of this command by the Supervisory Commission, the matter has not yet made any progress and the commission has now failed to reply to all orders for nearly a year. In the Molotschna colonies, meanwhile, both the ecclesiastical dissension and the persecutions of the young church have continued, as heretofore; the attempted land purchase has been postponed, and Claassen and the brethren suffer ever greater ruin.

a) "VI. The order of the Area Administrative Office to Claassen in St. Petersburg, dated July 4, 1861.

"On July 18, 1861, Claassen received the following order from the Molotschna Mennonite Area Administrative Office:

"The Area Administrative Office has transferred your petition for issuance of a visa and deputization by your like-minded cohorts to the Supervisory Commission for Foreign Settlers. The president of the commission verbally ruled that since you have seceded from the church and therefore cannot produce the ministerial certification necessary for the issuance of a visa, you may in no way be issued an annual visa, but only a one-month visa necessary for your return. If you do not return within that time, however, the commission shall be notified and the necessary measures will be taken for your police extradition.

"Regarding the certification of your deputization, His Excellency ordered that the law be followed, which states that such deputization must be obtained in the circuit courts, where the issuing parties must personally sign them. The Area Administrative Office herewith sends your one-month visa and advises you, upon receipt of the same, unless you want to be treated as a vagabond, to return immediately because the Area Administrative Office will promptly execute His Excellency's orders regarding your return.

Colony Administrator Friesen
Secretary Martens.

b) "VII. Claassen's further moves.

"Naturally Claassen could not comply with such a demand without at the same time giving up all hope of a swift consummation of his assignment, all the more because it was evident that only decisive intervention on the part of the higher authorities could bring about an unprejudiced and just settlement of the religious dissension in question. But Claassen still did not neglect to make numerous urgent petitions to the Area Administrative Office in order to achieve a peaceful settlement of the dispute. Meanwhile, on July 24, 1861, he presented a written complaint to the honorable president of the Supervisory Commission in which he requested just protection, at least insofar as was necessary for the land purchase in progress, on the basis of the religious liberties promised to the Mennonites. At the same time, Claassen explained, among other things, how he was forced to distrust the contents of the order of July 18, 1861, received from the Area Administrative Office, because this order, though allegedly issued by the president, was in contradiction to the existing laws, which make no mention of the ministerial certification practiced by the Mennonites, and positively

guarantees the issuance of a passport to persons in similar positions to him, Claassen, at any time. Claassen further explained that he could produce the required ministerial certification, though none other than that issued by his own church, whose authority was not recognized by the Area Administrative Office. And finally, Claassen declared that he was thoroughly familiar with deputizations by the district courts, and that he also knew that without the certification of the identity of the deputizer on the part of the Area Administrative Office, no district court could undertake the corroboration of a similar document, all the more because the Area Administrative Office also persistently denied the passports on which the district court bases its judgments. Finally, Claassen, enclosing a three-ruble bill for the passport fee, requested that the honorable president kindly limit the arbitrariness of the Area Administrative Office, and urge the same to issue the necessary passports for him, Claassen, and the brethren who wished to travel to the Crimea to inspect the land, as well as issuing the necessary certification for the corroboration of the deputization in the district court.

"Regrettably, all those petitions, complaints and demands, as well as the manifold orders of the higher ministries have to date been unable to elicit either an answer or explanation on the part of the Supervisory Commission, and although the silence of the commission must serve as proof of the unconstitutionality of the procedure in the case, to the colonial administration, this state of affairs only condemns the oppressed brotherhood to further harsh persecution and final ruin."

§160 5. Cause and Consequences of this Petition. The Council of Church Leaders. According to A. Klaus, *Our Colonies*, page 265 (Russian original, page 179):

a) ". . . In the attempt to suppress the new church, as occasion permitted, and in the need to support such an intention, a few of the most determined ecclesiastical elders began to refer to the 1851 resolution of the Council of Church Leaders [cf. below #160(2)] and thus revealed the existence of this document[!?]. The majority of the Mennonite brotherhood was not a little agitated by this their unexpected subservience to the Council of Church Leaders . . . and amongst them even one or two of the elders found that the Council constituted a governing body that was incompatible with the spirit and essence of the teachings of Menno Simons; and yet these people submitted to the majority and were silent [not really!]. Others recognized, without grumbling, the accomplished fact in the hope that, with the assistance of the Council, the former peace could be reestablished in the district. [In retrospect, Klaus seems to have confused the events of the 40s and the

60s]. Yet, those against whom the real centralization of the ecclesiastical power was directed were neither silenced nor made submissive. In the hands of this group of inhabitants the act of April 7, 1851, only became a new, and indeed a very effective measure. . . ." Page 266: [quotes the act of Jan. 6, 1860] ". . . The power of the Council was declared [by the secessionists] to be illegal and they declared their own goal, under the leadership of their own elder and their own ministers, to be—to defend the true teaching of Menno Simons in all its strictness and simplicity. The Council responded with a decision of Jan. 19, 1870, to separate the new church from the old . . . . Ultimately this separation of the members of the new parish brought them into an extremely oppressive situation with respect to the economy as well as to church life.

b) "Reluctantly and with heavy heart the 'Huepfer' [they had earned this appellation through their own zeal] turned to the government for help. We say 'reluctantly' because the Mennonites, like all sectarians, try hard to manage without administrative meddling, especially in questions of faith. [Unfortunately, perhaps not enough!] Not to trouble the government with complaints and quarrels had till then been one of the guiding principles of the Mennonite brotherhood [?! cf. Deputies Hoeppner and Bartsch, 'Kleine Gemeinde,' 'Lichtenauer,' Elder Jakob Warkentin and Heinrich Wiens, 'Barley Affair' and 'Halbstadt church building quarrel!']. The violation of this rule, which the landless in particular did often [who began to seek help from the government a little later than the 'brethren'], served the authorities as an official reason to impose fines and other punishments, because similar complaints harmed the good reputation and the interests of the brotherhood, by degrading the century-old reputation of being peaceful and model citizens inherited from their fathers."

c) "Almost every private complaint by the landless Mennonites begins with the phrase: 'With the greatest regret,' 'To the disgrace of the brotherhood,' etc. The representative of the 'Huepfer' [Johann Claassen] having arrived in St. Petersburg,[143] petitioned for over a year to be granted land in the Caucasus before he openly expressed his views about the state of affairs on the spot. Only the most extreme necessity, the refusal to send him a passport, finally forced him to enlighten the government concerning the object of the quarrel." [Klaus was at that time a young official in the Ministry of Crown Lands and quite familiar with Claassen's case. There follows the statement of the familiar content of the petition to His Majesty and the only hope of the brethren to receive protection only from the government.]

d) [Supplement to #106.] ". . . Indeed [Page 288], the government

did not delay in issuing an order to the effect that the ecclesiastical separation was in no way to be accompanied by restrictions of civil rights or prosecution by the police. With regard to the recognition of the new parish, however, obstacles were encountered in that our laws do not touch upon the dogmatic aspect of the Mennonite doctrine. Thus the question arose: Which of the two parties should one consider a sect, which one to have deviated from the Mennonite doctrine guaranteed by law?[144] Yet to enter into a discussion of this matter is not in the spirit of our laws, which demands from other religious organizations only that their doctrine should not contain anything contrary to the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, morals and civil order . . . ." [The central government has decided this matter without asking the question, which of the two parties were "the real Mennonites," but accepted both "as Mennonites." Compare above #105, footnote and "Confession of Faith" 1900/1902, administrative-juridical postscript, "C," "Statement of the Ministry of Interior," 1880 and 1896.]

§160(2) 5(2). In respect to the Council of Church Leaders [cf. above, under #15 Prussian Mennonites, "Council of Church Leaders"] Klaus, on page 263, quotes from a memorandum of the "Friends of Jerusalem," the brethren Lange and others (see #51 and #52) as follows: "In a special document [the church elders] represented themselves to the governmental authorities, without the permission and authority of the congregations, as a religious body possessing high authority and the power to direct, rule, and judge the entire brotherhood. Until today [probably an error in translation: 'until then?'] discussions concerning the general welfare naturally belonged within the sphere of activities of the Council of Church Leaders; their resolutions, however, could not at all be implemented without the prior consent of the congregations. [Today, and for some time already, the practice is again that of the original Anabaptists.] No elder, as the empowered representative of his flock, had the right to grant his consent or signature to a measure which had not previously been approved by the parish church. The Council of Church Leaders, on the contrary, as is evident from its change in name to 'Kirchenkonvent' [cf. further documents of 1827 and 1828!], assumed the role of a body independent of the congregations."

The document of 1851, mentioned by Klaus above, does not establish the "Kirchenkonvent"—even the "Comptoir of Foreign Settlers" in Ekaterinoslav writes, on Dec. 9, 1827, to the "Molotschna Mennonite Council of Divines," and on May 24, 1828, a 'most respectful' resolution is conveyed to this "Comptoir" by the same "Molotschna Mennonite Council of Divines"—but merely enlarges its authority in a rather un-Mennonite manner, establishing it in very obscure terms. It was finally given force (according to Franz Isaak, *Die Molotschnaer*

Mennoniten, page 122) "after lengthy debates in the church" [therefore not in 'secret!'], on April 7, 1851, in the following decision of the elders": "We beseech the Area Administrative Office to present this our submission to His Excellency, the Chairman of the Supervisory Commission, as our answer to their official instruction [!!] of February 6, 1850, under No. 22 [thus more than a year had transpired before there was compliance], with the addition that we now and in the future fully recognize and agree with the Gnadenfeld Mennonite Church [cf. #50], that the churches of the Molotschna Mennonite District abide, in respect to religious cases of special difficulty, in a relationship of mutual counsel and aid to the council representing all the churches, therefore, in a kind of relationship of subordination, insofar as this seems really necessary. The elders: Bernhard Fast, Benjamin Ratzlaff, Heinrich Toews, Peter Wedel, Dirk Warkentin."

But earlier a number of elders, with B. Fast at their head, had already acted as a kind of "superior" group in matters pertaining to Elder H. Wiens (see ##37 and 61). On page 116, Franz Isaak reports: "After the reception of the administrative instruction [cited by Isaak] of the president of the Supervisory Commission [August 14, 1846, in regard to Elder Wiens], the entire religious leadership of the Mennonites was invited to the Area Administrative Office and the instruction was read to them [on 30th of August]. Wiens denied his unseemly conduct towards His Excellency [in a personal conversation with Privy Councillor Hahn in the Area Administrative Office, in regard to which matter Wiens was now being accused] before this assembly and remained obstinate in his stance. Thereupon, in the church at Ohrloff, Wiens was declared, by the Elders Fast, Wedel, and Ratzlaff, to be unworthy of further service in this office. Although Wiens was informed of this action, he nevertheless totally ignored the written explanation of the above elders." Thereupon followed the decree of his banishment by the Administrative Office after recommendation by the Commission. In another place Isaak quotes a letter of the Colony Administrator Toews, a like-minded companion and friend of Johann Cornies, wherein, among other things, one reads on page 119: "After this [after the above-mentioned meeting of the entire ministerial staff in the Area Administrative Office on August 30, 1846, as recounted above], the Area Administrative Office and the Agricultural Society wrote to the ministerial personnel of all the churches to deal with Wiens [!] since the Area Administrative Office and the Society had declared him unworthy [!]. Thereupon the Elder Bernhard Fast, Friedrich Wilhelm Lange [cf. #49; why are Elders Ratzlaff and Wedel—and in the earlier account, Lange—not mentioned here? A typographical error?] and their ministers sent in a formal declaration of Wiens' deposition, dated Sept. 21, 1846, with the implication that in the future he not perform any

spiritual functions, and, failing this, he be reported [!] to the governmental authorities as a disobedient person . . . ." A deputation to the Commission, with the full authorization of many friends of Elder Wiens, could not avert his fate. These new sources (which came to our attention only after our book was essentially completed) explain ##35-38, 50 and 61 more clearly in this same sense: Cornies, whose greatness and achievements are indisputable, but whose errors and eccentricities cannot be hidden either, exerted strong control over the church with the help of the higher civil power which did whatever Cornies considered acceptable. Thus the Council of Church Leaders was obliged to exercise undue authority. After Cornies died, the matter tended in the same direction for some time, until Ohrloff, remaining alone, rejected all "subordination" (which it had itself previously demanded: cf #50) and, thanks to its many intelligent forces and to the confidence which Philip Wiebe enjoyed in high places (cf. #108, Ohrloff's recognition of the M.B. Church) was able to carry the matter to its conclusion (#52(2)). The M.B. Church was able to do the same. The "Templers," according to the sources in Franz Isaak's *Molotschna Mennoniten*, helped not a little in guiding the assembly of churches back to their original—their proper and most valuable—role as an authoritative, fatherly-brotherly, advisory assembly, particularly in respect to authoritative representation.

§160(3) 5(3). Note. In order to correct, that is justify and amplify what we have said earlier, in #52, point g, about the brethren Lange, we quote A. Klaus, *loc. cit.*, pages 291 and 301. ". . . When . . .their special school . . . soon . . . gained the confidence of people generally, resentment against them reached its height. The Council of Church Leaders and the Administrative Office maintained that the ultimate objective of the sect of the 'Friends of Jerusalem,' with its center in Wuerttemberg, was not only to transform all existing Christian churches but also to change their entire social life so that the adherents of this doctrine would consequently adopt a posture of antagonism toward the instituted authorities. They asserted that the Lange brothers taught the same things in the schools founded by them. They demanded the utter expulsion of the Lange brothers, if not from Russia, then at leaset from the midst of the Mennonite colonies, since the further stay of these persons could only endanger the peace of the colonies. All such accusations were not substantiated by actual proof . . . . Finally, the explanations offered by the Langes themselves, and their written defence of the doctrines of their teachings, placed beyond doubt that the electoral body of the Mennonites, in this case as well, was moved mainly by motives of religious intolerance and by the spirit of partisanship . . . [Page 301] . . . . In view of the prevailing agitation of

passions, the Lange brothers preferred to avoid further quarrels and persecution" [and moved to the Caucasus] . . . . Compare also Franz Isaak, *loc. cit.*, page 250: "[In the Ministry Office the Lange brothers] were confronted with various complaints submitted by the Commission, by Lenzmann, and by the president of the Agricultural Society, Peter Schmidt . . . [cf. page 255] . . . The entire secular and religious administration stood in opposition to the Lange brothers . . . [page 256] . . . They were permitted to settle in the Caucasus . . ." [instead of the threatened expulsion].

§161 6. Letters of Otto Forchhammer, Claassen's Companion, Concerning the Earliest Impressions at the Beginning of their Work in St. Petersburg.

a) Forchhammer—to the brothers and sisters in the Molotschna. "St. Petersburg, November 28, 1860 . . . . The next morning [after arriving on Nov. 20] Br. Claassen visited Br. Plonus, a Baptist and by profession a master tailor, who, despite his cramped quarters, gladly received us into his home. [They did not stay there very long . . . .] We first called on Br. Meier [bookseller, and an old acquaintance of Claassen from the time that Claassen travelled in the interests of the Brotherhood School]. He received us cordially, but his response to our account about what we really wanted to achieve, was a shrug of the shoulders and occasional sympathetic exclamations. Before I continue, I must say that I too, from a human point of view, really have no good news to report. However, we know that it is not the Tsar nor his ministers who rule [in the sense of Proverbs 21:1 and Psalm 33:15], but Christ. We also know and believe that it is He who directs our affairs so that all honor come to Him even when events seem to go counter to all of our desires and hopes! Well, I must continue! Upon leaving Meier, we went on the same day to see Pastor Nielsen, the pastor of the Moravian Brethren Church. He received us warmly and to a certain extent also as brothers. Strictly speaking, Pastor Nielsen is not a man according to our taste. As well as being an eloquent man, he is very clever and reasonable, and so tolerant that it is a pity [as Forchhammer was himself soon to become! Actually he was always like that at heart, but now he tries to speak entirely in the spirit of W. Bartel and Kappes. But see Bartel's letter to him and our comments on it, as above XVII]. However, he has one good quality which is his readiness to serve. He demonstrated that to us [which is really the best evidence of a brotherly spirit!]. Years ago, especially in connection with the issue of Wuest and the Mariopol brethren, he proved that he had influence with the authorities of this world,[145] on behalf of the brethren. Well, Pastor Nielsen listened to our cause sympathetically. His comments, however, revealed that he was not on our side in this, but rather on that of our opponents. Nevertheless, he gave us an interesting

explanation as to how things are done in the large government departments. But to go on! Pastor Nielsen was friendly toward us and made an appointment for us to discuss the whole issue thoroughly with him the next evening. The next morning we first went to see Neumann, but we were not immediately admitted. We had to try three times before he received us. Meanwhile we had been back to visit Nielsen the evening before, who earnestly admonished us to seek reconciliation in peace. He urged us to abandon our position on communion and to receive it again in the general (Mennonite) Church. However, when he saw that all his admonitions were without effect, he promised that he would go to the Department of the Minister of the Interior the next morning, where he knew some influential persons. He made an appointment for us to return the next day so that we might hear what he had been able to achieve. The next morning we went to see Neumann for the third time and were finally admitted. He received us cordially but said to Br Claassen right at the outset: 'Your affairs are in bad shape.' Then he informed us that the officials in all the departments, from the highest to the lowest, regarded us as a divisive sect, which provided a dangerous example to the Russian Church itself. Because of this there is not the slightest sympathy in these departments for us; in fact, quite the contrary. [This situation soon changed; cf. further Senator Hahn and other friends of Claassen.] Neither would submitting a written petition to the Tsar help us any, because the Tsar does not make decisions personally[?!] but refers the issue to the ministry concerned. I must confess that when I heard what he said, I lost all hope of success. I thought to myself: 'our right in this world is lost.' From there we returned to Pastor Nielsen, who told us that he had two matters that he wanted to impress upon us, which he did in a very long speech which we were not permitted to interrupt. His first point was this: to remain in the Mennonite colonies and establish an independent church, without the approval of the elders was an impossibility. For, he continued, if the elders and leaders in the Mennonite brotherhood were to declare that they would not recognize us, we would lose all claims on the 'privileges.' Therefore, he again advised us to seek peace and to abandon our position on communion and baptism. However, if this was completely impossible, we should seek to retain our privileges by moving out and establishing a separate colony. But where? The region of the Amur was not open for reasons which he was not at liberty to share with us. However, in the Crimea [in the whole area of Taurida] the land of the Nogai was being sold. He advised us to quietly petition the head of the second department, Gerngross, who was presently in Odessa, for permission to make such a move. From Odessa the petition would go to the Governor in Simferopol, I believe. Well, that is as far as we have come, dear brothers and sisters. We sent you a telegram[146] the day before

yesterday; we hope you have understood it. Claassen intends to make several more efforts. Otherwise, God be praised and thanked, things are going well! Plonus is a right gallant brother, with whom, except for his legalism,[147] we can agree entirely. There is some prospect that I could stay here and work as a colporteur. On the other hand, it does not seem likely that the authorities would grant me the liberty of conscience to do this work as I would wish to do it. Without such liberty, as God gives me grace, I do not want to engage in it. It looks as if we cannot be used in this world anymore; therefore, may God help us quickly to attain the next where He Himself is Tsar, King and all. November 29. Last night we again visited Neumann. He was in good humor and rather talkative, giving us reason to hope that not only would we be able to find out in St. Petersburg at what price the land was being sold, but also whether the higher authorities would sanction your resettlement, and, if so, whether you could receive a written guarantee—black on white—that your privileges would remain intact. Neumann wants to achieve all these things, but since he is hindered in his movements by some kind of illness, he commissioned us to ask Pastor Nielsen to visit him, so that they might jointly pursue the matter. November 30. Yesterday Nielsen assured us that he would go to Neumann and enquire of the ministry concerning the above matters. The day after tomorrow, in the evening, we have another appointment with him. Brothers and sisters, may it go well with you! Write us . . . with cordial love, O. Forchhammer."

b) O. Forchhammer to Kappes, no date. "Dear Kappes! Finally you too are to receive a letter from me, from the large and magnificent city of St. Petersburg. You will have heard that I accompanied Claassen . . . . Because the brethren at Kharkov [followers of Wuest] are more or less our opponents . . . we drove straight through without stopping . . . . Nielsen[148] is a bosom friend of Saib, which in itself describes his essential character. Yet he is very obliging . . . . But he does not speak well of you. He says, 'Kappes has written me a rude letter and is ungrateful; for a few years ago the Lord used me in a special way to get him out of a difficult situation.' I told him that by the grace of God I was your brother . . . . But it did not help . . . . 'What Kappes is seeking to do is not good!' . . . Secondly, we visited a Mr. Neumann. He is a somewhat mysterious man. He owns an orphanage, which as I believe I heard, he established at his own expense. He is in touch with the highest authorities and is even supposed to have access to the Tsar himself. This is precisely where the mystery lies, for he is otherwise quite an ordinary person, without rank or dignity, and yet undertakes to handle cases of the greatest importance, and that free of charge for poor people. [Neumann was probably an outstanding lawyer and as such, even though 'without rank or dignity,' influential.] He has a Christian

philosophy of life, and fortunately for us, cannot endure the Lutheran clergy, which is why he is sympathetic to the brethren. For this reason, too, he has shown a deep interest in Claassen's concerns and has stood by him in word and deed . . . . The third great man whom we have met is His Excellency, the Privy Councillor [and Senator] von Hahn. He, too, received us cordially and declared himself willing to help us. Thus, the Lord has been with us in our efforts and has said to these great people: 'Do not speak otherwise than friendly with Claassen and Forchhammer . . .' [Forchhammer was a colporteur in the service of the British and Foreign Bible Society. To the pastors who wanted him for 'home missions,' he declared openly and honestly, 'as though through death,' what his attitude was to the church . . . and 'then they wanted nothing of me anymore . . . .' His position with respect to the church presented no problem to the British Society.] In all this I rejoice that I have my dear Baptist brother Plonus here, who until now, stood very much alone among all these ecclesiastically-minded friends. Now, my sweet brothers and sisters, I ask one thing of you: Have faith, in the measure that God gives you grace, that the almighty Savior by His almighty and divine grace will keep me, poor human—who, as you know, is so frail and weak—unto eternal salvation, even here in St. Petersburg. And may the awareness of that unspeakably sweet and blessed mystery, which was opened to me through Kappes so many years ago, so that I saw myself at the time as rescued, for ever and eternally, out of the deepest distress, be kept alive in me, namely the mystery: 'our life is hid with Christ in God.' Halleluja! May God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, be praised. Kappes, greet all the brothers and sisters in the Lord . . . . Until we meet again, preferably rather soon before the throne of the Lamb . . . . Forchhammer."

c) Forchhammer to the brothers and sisters in the Molotschna. "St. Petersburg, December 19, 1860. Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord! . . . Soon after I mailed my last letter to you, we explored another source of help! We visited the Privy Councillor von Hahn. . . . We were quite concerned about the sort of reception we would get from this great man and waited with anxiety when the servant went in to announce us. Contrary to our expectations, however, he met us at the door and cordially invited us to come in. We were seated in his grand office and he listened to us with quiet attention. Claassen set before him the present state of affairs and concluded by saying to him that you would also be prepared to resettle if you could have a written guarantee of your privileges. Hahn assured us that no one would be able to take away your privileges because of differences in matters of belief and promised to secure information about the resettlement from the appropriate authority. He asked us to come again in a few days. The result was that

he sent us to the second-in-charge of the second department, who told us under what conditions the Crown provided land for colonists. He was even good enough to give us a copy of these conditions, so that we could copy these down at home . . . We found a brother who translated these for us, and I enclose a copy for you. Claassen was not at all satisfied with these conditions and you probably will not be satisfied either . . . . [Neumann wants to] make representations to the Minister of Finance and he has hopes that better conditions will be forthcoming. The problem is that now, just before the end of the year, all departments are extremely busy, the more so since the question affecting the peasants [abolition of serfdom] is to be decided by January 1. . . . Today is the second day in which I have again been working as a colporteur . . . . There is an English and North American chapel here which ministers to the English and North American people who have left the state church. I like to go there because the English language is something of a hobby for me, and I like the minister and the songs and the melodies which they sing. Only the prayers in their prayer meetings do not appeal to me, for these are as lamentable as those of our Christian [St Petersburg] friends are . . . . O. Forchhammer."

7. Johann Claassen's "Peace Proposal." (Cf. Petition to His Majesty.) §162

"To the esteemed Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt. I request and petition the esteemed Area Administrative Office to provide me voluntarily with an annual pass and also with the required documents, without which I cannot do anything when it comes to serious negotiations in the matter of land purchase. I would also request that the common rights of citizenship be no longer denied our church, and that it not be disturbed in the practice of its worship services. I would also ask that the Area Administrative Office speak to the ministers in Rudnerweide and Pordenau so that they cease and desist from practicing a boycott which hampers common business transactions and is ruining us economically. That these burdens can become too heavy for us, especially for me, since I have been separated from my family for such a long time, any father who loves his family will understand. My papers will also show that in whatever regard I have worked for settlement on crown lands here, I have always written, spoken, and acted in the interests of the whole. Therefore, those who think that I am trying to bring about the abrogation of the rights of the colonies are seriously in error. For I know full well that if we move out of the colonies, we will still be living in this world, although it is also true that we will be living much more quietly than here, where we are constantly being oppressed and harrassed. From all of the enclosed papers, it will become evident to the

Area Administrative Office that this is my final peace proposal. It will also be clear that I am not prompted by personal preference, but that the pressure of circumstances compels me to press for a decision—either our rights are guaranteed to us by our high authorities or they are declined. God knows the answer; I do not. Time will tell. Should the Area Administrative Office peacefully provide me with the needed documents, as I very much wish, and if the said ministers will refrain from practicing a boycott which ruins us economically, then I shall herewith be the first to extend my hand for civil peace and will begin again to value those who are set over me in the Area Administrative Office and to trust them. Privy Councillor Hahn would rejoice that we had come to such an amicable understanding. The Ministry of Crown Lands would be glad because there would be less correspondence, and the many personal offences that have arisen in these controversies would finally be forgotten. However, because the time until May 23 will be too short a time for me to get my pass, I will go to the Ministry of Crown Lands on that day and request a postponement and that they not yet write [to the commission], but that they wait for a few more days because of the shortness of time. I ask the Area Administrative Office to forward the enclosed letters: the one to Isaac Matthies in Rudnerweide and the other to Heinrich Huebert in Liebenau together with the appropriate authorization for him. In addition, I have another request of the Area Administrative Office, whom I trust in this regard, to send copies of all three documents directed to the Area Administrative Office to our minister Heinrich Huebert in a sealed envelope in order to avoid a major misunderstanding. Waiting, with highest expectations, I am, respectfully, Johann Claassen, Liebenau.

"P.S. Because I have high hopes that the Area Administrative Office will grant me my pass and the needed authorization peacefully, I humbly request that you communicate your decision to Heinrich Huebert in Liebenau without delay. In a letter I have charged him to notify me immediately, by telegram, whether the answer is 'yes' or 'no.' Then I can make the necessary submissions here to the First Department of the Ministry of Crown Lands. St. Petersburg, April 29, 1861, Johann Claassen."

§163 8. The Communications [Claassen] Received From the Privy Councillor von Hahn.

"To the Colony Administrative Office in Halbstadt. When I left the Molotschna in November 1860, my pass was only valid till November 25. Therefore I left instructions with my family to secure an annual pass from the Area Administrative Office and to send it to me. Instead, my family notified me by telegram that the Area Administrative Office

would not grant me a pass under any circumstances. I then went to someone I knew who arranged admission for me to the First Department of Crown Lands. I informed the head of this Department, Mr. von Heinrichson, about the difficulty I had in getting a pass. He provided me with the address of the Second Department of the St. Petersburg Police Administration. From them I received a pass valid for 6 months, until May 25, 1861. However, since my business kept me here much longer than I expected and, moreover, since I had no idea how much longer it might take, I went to the Privy Councillor, von Hahn, on the 3rd day of Easter, April 25, concerning my need. I had been to see him several times already during the preceding winter. He was very cordial and invited me into his parlor. In response to his question as to whether I was still in St. Petersburg, I answered yes, and told him what my situation really was and what had happened since I last saw him. I told him first of all about my efforts in the Ministry of Crown Lands concerning resettlement, with the Under-Secretary of State and Assistant Minister of Finance, Mr. von Hagemeister, with the Councillor H. von Novosselsky, with the Assistant Minister of War, H. von Miliutin, with Prince Bariatinsky, the brother of the Governor of the Caucasus. Chiefly, we spoke of the settlement in the Caucasus. Secondly, quite explicitly, I told his Excellency about the state of affairs in the Molotschna, how things were going for us and what the real reason was for my stay in St. Petersburg. In response to my question to his Excellency as to whether I might write the Area Administrative Office what he said to me, he arose and with a serious expression on his face, said: 'Yes, I permit you to write all of it.' Becoming even more serious and pointing at himself with his finger, he added: 'And say that I said it.' I wish that the Area Administrative Office would understand his Excellency and remember, in time, the many issues concerning the colony which he has settled. Although H. von Hahn does not serve in the Ministry of Crown Lands any longer, his attitude and his rank are nonetheless significant, and as he himself said, he has friends there with whom he has influence. Because my discussion with him lasted more than an hour, there is too much for me to report, and too much for the Area Administrative Office to read. I, therefore, have only written the essentials of our conversation. Concerning the pass, his Excellency said: 'To those who have paid their fees, as you have, a pass can in no wise be denied, and the Area Administrative Office is legally bound to give one to you.' I further asked about my authorization. His Excellency said: 'When a church draws up an authorization according to the provisions of the law and signs it, then the Area Administrative Office is obliged to ratify it, and that is not a matter of choice.' I also asked him about the Isaak Matthies case in Rudnerweide. His Excellency answered: 'Those who owe Isaak Matthies money and seek to hinder and ruin him by what

they are doing, must pay him the money coming to him. File a petition on the matter; things like that cannot go on.' Concerning the deputies who must of necessity inspect the lands in question, his Excellency said, excitedly: 'Judge for yourself! How can the Area Administrative Office deny them passes? Even the Ministry cannot prevent the Mennonites if they want to move from one province to another.' When we had finished our discussion, Privy Councillor von Hahn went into his office and wrote a letter to Mr. von Heinrichson in the Ministry of Crown Lands. I delivered this letter on the 26th of April and at the request of the Ministry, I submitted a petition, a copy of which I enclose. On the same day, when I returned to my room, I found a letter from the Ministry of Crown Lands, which I also enclose. On the 28th of April I was again in the First Department of the Ministry of Crown Lands. Mr. von Heinrichson told me that he had looked through my petition and found that I had neglected to say from where the Area Administrative Office was to get the fee for the pass; I would have to change that and add the information. Then I would have to take the pass which had been cut in two, together with my written submission to the Area Administrative Office to the post office, secure a receipt for it from them, and then come with this receipt to the Ministry of Crown Lands. He indicated though that it might also be well to wait awhile; perhaps the Area Administrative Office would send me my annual pass in response to my request. However, if the pass was not here by May 23, the Ministry of Crown Lands would order the Area Administrative Office to grant me an annual pass. Mr. Heinrichson added: 'You have nothing to fear; we have decided to get involved in this issue.' The men here in this Department simply cannot understand how it is possible for the Area Administrative Office, at a time when all across Russia efforts are made, especially by the Tsar, to give subjected peoples freedom—how in such a time our Area Administrative Office can begin to exercise despotic control and to tyrannize free people. I often do not know what to answer. I am herewith sending my authorization which my officials [givers of authority] will sign. I ask and demand, on the basis of law, that the Area Administrative Office ratify these signatures. His Excellency has assured me that I will then be fully authorized to function. I have told his Excellency many things, but I have not shared the fact that we cannot trust our letters (I have written about twenty and in turn received about that number and exchanged about ten telegrams) to go the direct way via Halbstadt. The reason for this is that with some misgivings I wrote one letter and mailed it by this route, and it did not ever reach my family. For this reason we send our letters about 100 versts south via Berdiansk, through W. Bartel, from where they are privately redirected. I am sending the enclosed documents—the petition addressed to the Ministry of Crown Lands and the directive received

from them, etc.—so that the Area Administrative Office may see that it is not without reason that I have taken these measures which are also unpleasant to me. I believe that these continuing controversies will not only harm those who oppose us but also us with them. They may actually jeopardize our privileges. The German colony, Karas, not far from Tiflis (from Piatigorsk!) in the Caucasus experienced this. I have been told that their former privileges were greater than ours but through continuous wrangling these have been greatly diminished. St. Petersburg, April 29, 1861. Johann Claassen from Liebenau."

9. Claassen's Friends, Advisers, and Assistants in St. Petersburg. §164

a) Letters of Baron von Mirbach in Claassen's cause. I. "Dear Mr. Claassen! Soon after you had left, I had a fine opportunity to submit your most humble petition [regarding land] to His Imperial Highness, the Grand-duke K. Unfortunately, the Grand-duke did not accept the petition. He said that it was none of his business, since he was so very busy in the committee studying the peasant question that he could not involve himself with matters pertaining to land or to related questions. But you might turn to the Minister Muraviev. Prince Bariatinsky is very ill and is abroad, so that he is not available to us. I regret very much that I was not able to help you in this matter but I hope our dear God will bless your efforts for the welfare of your church. Give my kindest regards to our friend, Mr. Keller. With greetings to you, Respectfully, Baron von Mirbach. April 18, 1861. P.S. Would you please come to pick up your petition one of these days." On the original copy Claassen, in his own handwriting, has added this note to his wife: "This letter, dear Katharina, you must carefully keep, so that no one can misuse it; that would be abuse of confidence. Your Claassen." In addition, a note in Claassen's handwriting: "Dear Katharina, here is a brief summary to let you see with what sort of gentlemen I must deal and many others with whom I have yet to deal . . . . Moreover, just think, there is as yet no prospect: 1) Pastor Nielsen. 2) Mr. Neumann. 3) Privy Councillor Hahn. 4) Mr. Heinrichson of the Ministry of Crown Lands. 5) His Excellency, Privy Councillor, Mr. von Hagemeister. 6) A gentleman of the cabinet to whom I was referred by Mr. von Hagemeister. His name I have forgotten [A. Klaus, according to a note from him to Claassen, at that time still a young official]. 7) His Excellency, Privy Councillor, Mr. von Novosselsky. 8) Major General Doctor Schmidt. 9) His Excellency, Privy Councillor, Mr. von Warneck. 10) Colonel Lemm. 11) Prince Bariatinsky. 12) Major [Baron] von Mirbach. 13) Assistant to the Minister of War, Miliutin. 14) Mr. Zaremba. 15) Major General Kolossovsky from the Caucasus. 16) Major General von Blaremberg. And then add to these some ten brethren and

friends who showed me favors insofar as they could . . . . The men who would like to help me, cannot, and those who can do not want to. Your Claassen." II. "Dear Mr. Keller! Today, during a conversation with the secretary of His Majesty, Mr. von M—tz, I spoke of the petition of the Mennonites and how I had failed to win the Grand-duke's interest in this matter. [The Grand-duke's adjutant had drawn up the petition.] Upon this, the secretary himself offered to submit the petition to His Majesty. Kindly draw up a new, thoroughly-prepared petition and ask the delegate [Claassen] to come to me in Pavlovsk. Tell him to ask for me in the palace or simply to present the petition at the Marble-Palace in St. Petersburg with the address of the authorizing body precisely indicated. Then I will deliver the paper to His Excellency, Mr. von M—tz, and the rest we wish, then, to commit to our dear God. His holy will be done, as in all things, so also in this good matter. With best regards to you and your loved ones, I am sincerely yours, R. von Mirbach. Pavlovsk, May 16, 1861."

b) Claassen to his wife. "From my diary. May 19. In the morning I went to Mr. Melchior Keller. Then we drove . . . to Pavlovsk . . . and went into the palace. We looked up Colonel [Baron] von Mirbach and delivered the petition at the palace . . . . The copy [of the former letter] I send along so that you might know that our Lord and Savior, to Him be glory forever, is in charge of the matter, not Claassen of Liebenau . . . . Johann Claassen."

c) Claassen to the brothers and sisters. "St. Petersburg, Aug. 21, 1861. Dear brother Jakob Reimer [Gnadenfeld], it is no surprise that your neighbor thinks I have reported lies to the Area Administrative Office. For how could I possibly have had access to all of these officials! Not only your neighbor is surprised, but also the officials of the cabinet marvel how I have come to know all these high-ranking government officials. Last night at the tea I was asked, jokingly, by what means I had approached all of these officials. With letters of references, I replied. Then I added quickly that I would be satisfied indeed to deal with half as many officials, if only my mission could be advanced. All three of us had to laugh at the presentation: to know all the important officials and in the end to be treated as a tramp! I was deeply convinced during the presentation that this was a very real possibility . . . . When I came into my quarters, I confided my burden, with much concern, to the Savior . . . . Often I receive a sheet full of notes and comments for a kiss on the hand or on the mouth, depending on the person. At other times, I received a few pages of poorly-written script, barely readable, and need to spend as much as ten silver rubles to have it copied for delivery . . . . [In his account only sixty rubles are entered as having been used for his numerous petitions and applications in a year and a half! His total daily expenditures amounted to 99 kopeks!] . . . He who would rather have his

silver rubles than his freedom is not a member fit for our mission. . . . Johann Claassen."

d) Claassen to his wife. "Aug. 2, 1861 . . . . I noticed that it affected him [Privy Councillor Hahn] very much that his advice was being ignored by the Area Administrative Office . . . . I said also that we regard the teaching concerning baptism seriously, and that we immerse, as Menno teaches [?!], that close to eighty persons had been baptized and that many revivals had taken place . . . . His Excellency was not opposed to this and said: 'I will help you. . . .' August 13. Our opponents do not know the present situation in Russia or else they would not be so foolish . . . . I have been told that the Emperor has issued a secret decree to the courts that in matters of faith, no persecution and no punishment are to take place. They are to be lenient . . . . Sept. 27 . . . . The Mennonites, said His Excellency [von Hahn], are generally looked upon as a sect, and whether they differed in their conception of baptism and communion, one from the other, was no reason to restrict trade and to deny passports. His Excellency said that if he were still in the committee, the matter would speedily be put in order [recollecting the case of Elder Jakob Warkentin and Heinrich Wiens] . . . . You know, my little woman, what often occurs to me? When I get home things will go with me as they did with the Gnadenfelder [Brotherhood] school and that makes me humble, which is precisely what a stubborn fellow like me needs. But I am afraid, for the brethren will not find me to their liking and I will not find them to mine. The main issue for me shall be to save my soul. . . . Johann Classen."

10. Claassen's Private Life in St. Petersburg. §165

a) Claassen to his wife. "St. Petersburg, April 20, 1861. We have in mind to celebrate communion tonight. Twice we have taken it, the two of us [he and Forchhammer]. . . . Johann Claassen."

b) Mrs. Claassen to her husband. "Liebenau, May 31, 1861. Hallelujah! Christ lives and I live with Him. Death, where is thy sting? Grave, where is thy victory? Hallelujah! Amen. My dear Claassen! . . . I was much delighted by your letter of May 18 in which you write that you have received the sad news about Johannes [their small son of about three years had drowned in the creek behind their garden], and that you accept the Lord's way with so much submission . . . . But that you intend to stay still longer does not please me at all. But the Lord will have to give me patience . . . . Out here they are particularly severe about baptism . . . . Katharina Claassen."

c) Jakob Becker to Claassen and Forchhammer. "Rudnerweide, October 8, 1861 . . . . Dear brethren, you could have given us no greater

joy than to inform us that our Gospel has also exerted influence there. We were delighted when you, Claassen, wrote that the chairs in the mission meeting [of the 'Christian friends'] began to move [in happy excitement about Claassen's and Forchhammer's report about how the Gospel has affected their hearts]. Your brother, Jakob Becker."

d) Claassen to his wife. "St. Petersburg, October 19, 1861. I did not want to ask the governmental authorities [this is the reproach of the brethren against him] whether we might believe and baptize, but only whether it is possible that we might be protected against deliberate attack, as Paul was protected against death by the Jews . . . . Paul did not want to ask the emperor whether he could believe, any more than I want to ask the authorities this. Furthermore, my dear little wife, you must distinguish between what the law says and what has been promised. [The question is whether he was willing to promise not to do this and that in return for the retention of received privileges, as some brethren feared. This, however, he denies.] . . . In the end, God's law stands highest . . . . It is God's grace that during the time I have been away it has pleased Him to give you His Spirit in even greater measure.[149] And we do not know what may yet happen in the future. May our gracious and good Savior be merciful to you and strengthen and comfort you to do His will! Amen."

e) "Sunday, October 22, we had a first meeting at the home of Br. Plonus. [Of him Forchhammer writes to Mrs. Gertrude Reimer on October 6: 'Plonus, the Baptist brother, has drawn much closer to us and now wants to have communion with us'—although neither Claassen nor Forchhammer had been 'baptized'] . . . We had urged German tradesmen to meet with us and now we preached the Gospel to them. . . . They promised to come again and to bring others with them. To begin with, the Lord sent us four of them [at first, social conversation, then singing, reading of the Scriptures] . . . and we discussed these quite informally . . . . We told them, too, that we were not pastors but that we had experienced the grace of God in our hearts, and this we hoped for them, too.[150] . . . Johann Claassen."

f) Claassen to his brothers and sisters. "St. Petersburg, January 3, 1862. . . . Sunday, the thirty-first, I visited the Duchess Dettloff [an elderly lady who introduced him to Mr. Mueller, a Prussian gentleman travelling to the Caucasus. He was on a land-purchasing mission for the Prussian Prince Albert and came to seek advice from Claassen]. I was with her from one to three o'clock, had breakfast, and talked of many things. [Thus, in Claassen's circle of friends the 'old wives of generals' of St. Petersburg, the well-known, influential 'Staruschki,' could not be absent either. The latter were kind and always ready to help, and formerly, so it was said, nothing could be done in St. Petersburg without

them . . . .] From there I went to Brun[151] where I met another gentleman and we had fellowship around the Word of God . . . . New Year [1862]. Before noon I read Job and that strengthened me . . . . After twelve noon I went to van Ark [organist of the Dutch church, in whose family he found the most congenial company]; towards evening Forchhammer also came to us. He had spent a night with Neander. We had a relaxing conversation . . . . Johann Claassen."

g) Brother Forchhammer was seriously ill for three weeks; Claassen had nursed him; we experienced much brotherly love: visits, soups, wines, a good doctor, and other things, grapes, apples, linens. "St. Petersburg, January 31 . . . . There was always something ready for dinner . . . . The old lady Nordbeck, a dear sister, would say: 'He who tends the sick must also receive something.' Soon provision was made that I could go out for two or three hours a day for fresh air . . . . [When the brothers and sisters—that is already the name for 'these church-minded Christian friends!'—noticed that Claassen was growing pale because he was constantly staying in the sick room, they relieved him periodically at nursing.] . . . Madame Nordbeck is a 74-year-old lady, very rich, but not ashamed to visit the sick in their nook. The physician [Dr. Mikvitz, son-in-law of Madame Nordbeck] visits Forchhammer almost daily. He is so friendly that one easily confides in him . . . . I was fortunate to see the Tsar at close range . . . . Johann Claassen."

h) Claassen to the brothers and sisters. "St. Petersburg, December 6, 1861 . . . Today several Baptist brethren from the Courland were with me. They, too, had a petition to the Emperor. They were Latvians, whom I had promised to help as much as I knew how. . . . Johann Claassen."

11. An interesting depiction of customs and manners at the Mennonite Area Administrative Office in the Molotschna at this time is given to us by Br. Jakob Reimer, Gnadenfeld, in a letter to Claassen. "On October 4 (1861), . . . I, Benjamin, and your wife [Reimer's sister] . . . and Brother Peters, Ladekopp . . . drove to the Area Administrative Office to obtain the decision on your petition to the Empress [cf. above; the question regarding the land purchase remained unresolved as yet; as we know, a half year later the Minister of War again took up the matter of the settlement in the Caucasus. On the assumption that Claassen had gone home, the petition and the resolution of the Ministry of Crown Lands had been sent to the Area Administrative Office], for the Area Administrative Office had written to your [Liebenauer] village office, that if you were home, you were to pick up the decision immediately. However, if you were not at home, this response was to be reported at §166

once. The Area Administrator [David Friesen] would not give us the decision, but he allowed me to copy it. At the table where I sat and wrote, there was seated, after all, only the small [secretary] Voth with one arm, and Brother Peters stood at my side, and the other people seemed quite kind, outwardly . . . ; still I felt as though my hands and my fingers were paralyzed when I wrote. [He was ordinarily an experienced and fluent writer and had read widely.] Then I was reminded of you, how you must feel with all the important officials around you . . . . We also asked for passports, but then again we were told: Present your identification documents according to regulations and you will get passports. We said: We can get these from the village mayor, and from the ministers, too. And who are your ministers? 'Huebert and Becker,' Peters replied. They have not yet been acknowledged. Then, too, you have never applied for passports in order to purchase land. This statement I refuted. Would you have both money and prospects to buy something? 'That I did not yet know,' was my reply, 'but one can always rent land, or it can be worked on a crop-sharing basis.' Regarding the latter, you have never applied. Yes, Sir! At least a number of times we have talked to you about that, but because you have always said: 'You will get no passports, there was no use talking about it; we could do nothing. For, of course, we would first want to go down to look at the land and to talk to the owners about it.' Bring your identification documents according to regulations, and do not wire so many lies [to St. Petersburg], for we will get hold of Claassen and publicly expose him as a liar and punish him. For the whole matter about Isaak Matthies [Rudnerweide] is a bundle of lies. [Alas, even today the Matthies family, which was ruined, knows all too well that it was true.] Sir, I do not know the details about the Matthies story, but what we have reported to St. Petersburg is true. When I had copied and handed back the decision, I asked once more for passports and that we might be permitted to live according to our convictions. 'Well,' he said, 'who keeps you from living piously and decently? You should conform to existing order and rule as we all do.' Sir, that is contrary to our understanding of the Word of God, for baptism is immersion; then, too, we have published books to prove that the first Mennonites practiced immersion. [Cf. XX. 'Baptism in the M.B. Church.'] Aren't you clever—much cleverer than I am and ever shall be. Well, Sir, you can read for yourself that Christ stepped into the Jordan and then out again; therefore, He must have descended into the water. Well, Christ must have conformed to the practice of His day; today the practice is as we have it. 'No, Sir, according to Matt. 15 this practice is a rule of the elders and not the command of God.''Hmm!' Do we then get our passports? As I said, bring personal identification papers according to the one general regulation which we have and you will get passports. Sir, what you ask for we cannot and will not do! Here

he became very angry. Then I will tell 'ya'[152] [you] also: we cannot and will not issue you any passports on your terms, and I advise you not to send out so many lies, or else you will suffer the consequences. This I want to see, whether we will be obliged to listen to you, and who will be right in the end: you and Claassen, or we. For now we will deal with the matter earnestly. Lies such as those respecting Matthies cannot stand! Sir, as I have said before, I am not acquainted with this story, but I do not believe that they would report lies. As far as we are concerned, it is the truth! Adieu! No, Reimer, even you are not quite truthful. Then, too, we must consider whether it is to your benefit that we supply you with passports. And this we cannot determine. Why not, Sir? After all, you have given passports to very poor people of our village and they are doing well on 'share-cropping.' Return to the church, for in the end you will not gain your suit. Sir, I too believe that, for if you have done any reading at all, you will know that the children of God have almost always been declared to be in the wrong, except where God has been especially gracious to them. But in yonder world we will be in the right. There I wish you all the best! Adieu! Adieu! Thus you see, dear brother, according to outward appearances we cannot expect anything good but only tribulation and bonds . . . . General talk has it that you have sued the Area Administrator, and you shall not escape with impunity . . . . Jakob Reimer."

12. The case of the School Teacher of Liebenau, Brother Gerhard Wieler, gives us additional glimpses of the religious and cultural life of the Mennonites of Molotschna during those days. [Cf. ##119, 120, 126, 145-147.] §167

Letters from Wieler to Claassen, St. Petersburg.

a) "Berdiansk, October 1, 1861. Dear brother in Christ, grace be with you and the peace of God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who shed His blood for us, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. To Him be honor, praise, glory, adoration for ever and ever. Hallelujah! Nothing can separate us from the love which is in Jesus Christ, which is created in Him, our Savior, that we might have peace apart from our own works, without our will [?], the peace which has been prepared from eternity, before the foundation of the world was laid. Therefore, dear brother, at all times and everywhere, rejoice. Praise the Lamb, seated at the right hand of God. He comes, He comes; soon He will call us! Hallelujah, adoration, praise, and honor, gloria! Blessed is He who comes. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Dear brother, be strong in faith. We may now draw near and take the water of life, freely. The world is in tumult, Satan rages and roars so that our flesh trembles, but be of good cheer, my soul 'be of good cheer, little

flock,' Jesus, our first-born Brother says: 'I have overcome the world.' Dear brother, there is no other way but this bloody path open before us on which our dear Savior preceded us, but praise and thanks be to God! We are bound for heaven! Rejoice with me, dear brother, that my wife, too, has found the foundation which supports our anchor. It is true that they now drive me out of school. But praise and thanks be to God, that which formerly was gain to me I now consider as refuse! In the world about us wickedness is revealed more and more but the Spirit of God strengthens us more and more according to His promise . . . . The Lord bless you. This I covet for you. Your brother in Christ, Gerhard Wieler."

b) Concerning the case of Gerhard Wieler. Private Tutor. I. "To the Mennonite Society for the Improvement of Farming, Trade, and Schools, Petition! The opportunity has been offered to some members of our church to have their children tutored privately by the capable teacher, Gerhard Wieler. He also instructs in the Russian language and is a member of our church. He possesses a good certificate [Wieler was one of the distinguished students of Heinrich Franz in the secondary school at Chortitza, and had been engaged by the Supervisory Commission for several years in Odessa] and has served as teacher for six years [in the Colony of Molotschna]. Therefore, the undersigned request permission of the Honorable Society in the name of those brethren in Liebenau, Peter Nickel Cornelius Reimer and [Mrs.] Johann Claassen to allow their children to be instructed by the school teacher Wieler in the home of Johann Claassen in the Liebenau Colony. The children would thus receive more thorough instruction in the German language than is given in the local village school and they would also be instructed in the Russian language. Heinrich Huebert, minister, Jakob Reimer, Cornelius Reimer, December 6, 1861. Colony of Gnadenfeld." II. "To the Molotschna Area Administrative Office at Halbstadt. Petition! The village office has prohibited the local [Mrs.] Johann Claassen to take a private tutor into her home for her children. However, no reason for the action was given except that, since Gerhard Wieler was not allowed to continue in the village school, they could not permit that he be tolerated as private tutor in Liebenau. Wieler has a valid certificate and has served as teacher for six years prior to this. I herewith request the Honorable Area Administrative Office to inform me in writing, as soon as possible, how according to the laws of the country the village office can deny the rights to engage a home tutor, especially since the village school in Liebenau, because of the change of school teachers, has suffered seriously in every respect, and no instruction in the Russian language has been offered in it. [Mrs.] Claassen is deeply desirous that her children receive instruction in the Russian language as well. Liebenau, December 8, 1861, Heinrich Huebert."

c) Gerhard Wieler to Claassen. "Still in Liebenau, December 12, 1861 . . . . You have been informed about my general well-being . . . . To the degree that I was formerly respected in the world I am now scorned. That is a dear sign that my Savior loves me, is it not? Yes, my dear brother, I love my Savior with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength, for this love is the love of my Savior in Whom I believe. For a long time I strove against the Spirit of God. Again and again I bargained with Him. Sometime in the future I would begin to be a disciple of Jesus. But first I wanted to do this and the other thing. And now, finally, I wanted simply to finish my school year, after which I would say good-bye to the world. But no, the Lord did not want it that way. He gave me no peace. Often I had to think about dying and then I was much afraid. Then I wished only to thresh my grain. That would afford me a good sum of money and it would be very well if I as a child of God would be able to earn even a small sum of money. (Fool that I was; I did not know that one is redeemed by grace.) But then, my brother, I became restless. Stop! a thought flashed through my mind: What if God were to harden your heart and to supply no further opportunity for repentance? Then you would be eternally lost. So I went and forsook all the glitter and all the beautiful prospects and hurried to my Savior. Now I am happy. The world about me scarcely noticed—at first only the so-called Liebenau Christian village church—when I was asked by the village mayor whether I, too, wanted to join the pious and the 'Huepfer' (as though it was only a matter of joining them). They did not ask me: Why are you so happy? But when I began to testify in public to the name of Jesus and referred to the pious as my brethren in Christ, and when I preached repentance and conversion to the others, Satan endeavored to rob me of the joy which was the fruit of my faith. First, the village mayor, Peters, told me that the neighbors did not want to send their children to my school. He hoped that this might persuade me to avoid the brethren who became dearer and dearer to me. But to the contrary, the more they (the world) discouraged me by their talk, the more Jesus encouraged me. And now I am happy! Next, the school society [the board of directors] came to Liebenau. I was asked to report to the village mayor where I was questioned: Do you wish to remain in Liebenau as a school teacher? Then you must avoid the brethren. I said that I would very much like to remain as teacher and should put forth every effort to fulfill my obligations as a teacher, but I did not want to act contrary to my conscience and avoid the brethren. Then the village council and the society wanted to explain to me how much in error we were. You can imagine how much their arguments contradicted the Word of God. The chairman, Schmidt, wanted to persuade me and to permit me, against his own conscience, to visit the brethren 'a little,' but not to join them. A stupid expression. An hour

after this discussion I was summoned before three so-called ministers and three church members (theirs). They wanted to convert me now, after I had been converted, or rather after Jesus had converted me. After I had told them the truth in the plainest terms, I finally asked them whether they had the Spirit of God. When they now failed to answer me, I told them that they were not children of God either and that they would go to hell if they were not converted. I told them that they were of the world and were persecuting those of us who had put on Christ. Thereupon I was given notice that my services were no longer needed. All this happened quickly . . . . (See Promemoria #143. h.) . . . Your brother in Christ. Wieler."

§168 13. Condemnation of the Matter Concerning Johann Claassen and the Young M.B. Church by Elder Lenzmann (from *Mennonitische Blaetter*, 1863).

I. Letter to Pastor Mannhardt, Danzig, publisher of the *Mennonitische Blaetter*. Before reading this letter of a man passionately agitated, frequently insulted, and under one-sided influence, we recommend that the reader review our conclusion of Chapter XVII concerning Gnadenfeld and Lenzmann. May the Mennonite elders stand corrected by the Russian statesman under #14 below, by the Lutheran pastor under #15, and by the Mennonite ministers of Ohrloff under #16! The letter reads as follows: a)[153] "Gnadenfeld, March 16, 1863. Beloved Brother in Christ! Convinced by your comment in *Mennonitische Blaetter* No. 6, that my report to you on July 21 of last year, concerning the separatistic proceedings that have occurred in our Molotschna District, has been lost, I hasten to send you the report once more, without essentially changing the contents. The Word of Scripture, 'Love covers a multitude of sins,' I Peter 4:8, has up to this point kept me from informing you—without having any personal reason for not doing so—about a new fanatical sect that has developed in our Mennonite Church here. However, since you have asked for some brother from the Molotschna who is accurately acquainted with the situation to submit a response, that is, a clarification and rectification of an aritcle in the *Friedensglocke* [a periodical published by Philipp Paulus, concerned especially with the 'last things' (eschatology) based on the prophecies of Holy Scripture], which you reprinted in No. 2 of the *Mennonitische Blaetter*, I recognize my duty to you and the dear readers of this paper not to keep silent any longer about this matter, since the article sent by 'a brother in St. Petersburg' to the publisher of the *Friedensglocke* is very likely connected with the activities of a certain Johann Claassen, of the village of Liebenau, who, until he withdrew from the Mennonite brotherhood, was my church member and has been in St. Petersburg

since November, 1860. b) The Pastor Wuest named in the said article of the *Friedensglocke* . . . [see above, in paragraph #75 c, Lenzmann's evaluation of Wuest, up to '. . . shall remain blest']. c) But if the reporting 'brother from St. Petersburg' says that 'through the richly blessed work of Pastor Wuest in the many German colonies on the Sea of Azov, active spiritual life was awakened, to which especially the glorious mission festivals conducted in Wuest's church contributed,' it might appear to the reader as though neither an active religious life was to be found nor glorious mission festivals celebrated in the many German colonies on the Sea of Azov prior to that time. If that was really the intended meaning, then for the sake of truth, it must be declared that such an assertion would be an untruth. In fact, several years before Pastor Wuest's arrival, here as well as in the Mennonite Church in Gnadenfeld under the administration of my highly respected predecessors, and also in the church at Rudnerweide (likely during the time of Franz Goerz, Sr.), and in the Separatist Church at the Sea of Azov, there had been meetings, and at least at the first-mentioned place also well-attended missions festivals. That in itself undeniably justifies the conclusion that even at that time here and there a rich life must have existed according to Matthew 7:16-20. [We have dealt with this above; the 'brother from St. Petersburg' in the *Friedensglocke* was probably Forchhammer who knew nothing about the earlier conditions among the Mennonites and who ascribed all spiritual life to Wuest.] d) And further, if the reporter from St. Petersburg presents the case as though the people who have left the church here were the real and genuine spiritual children as well as adherents of Pastor Wuest, and were persecuted primarily because of this, then that, too, is such a gross defamation of the deceased, who, of course, can no longer defend himself against the insult inflicted on him, and I was astonished when I read this impudent distortion, as everybody here knows. e) The simple truth about the origin and development of the sect which the St. Petersburg reporter defends so warmly, in short, is as follows: The so-called believers or brethren felt insufficiently satisfied by the regular sermons in Sunday and holiday worship-services and organized meetings among themselves in which every member of the congregation,[154] regardless of age or sex, as an equally qualified priest anointed with the Holy Spirit, explained the Scriptures and prayed aloud. With this arrangement they naturally progressed rapidly in the knowledge, and particularly in the exploitation, of the scriptural teaching of the free grace of God in Christ, so that they soon left Pastor Wuest far behind. And when their efforts to drag Pastor Wuest along with them remained fruitless; when Pastor Wuest did not hesitate, even, to admonish them according to God's Word in regard to their false teaching and begged them to turn from their arrogant way, to be ashamed of it before God, and to humble themselves, they turned

their backs on him at a conference in the fall of 1858[155] and loudly declared that they would have nothing to do with him henceforth but would go their way according to the Holy Scriptures and their conscience. f) Since that separation confusion among them progressed irresistibly. Just one example, demanded by the complaint of the reporter from St. Petersburg; one of the 'two highly regarded school teachers' in the Mariopol District, 'reported to have had a particularly blessed ministry in his village,' could no longer participate in the regular church services because his Christian conscience revolted against sitting 'in the seat of the scoffers' according to Psalm 1:1. At the same time, his conscience and his understanding of free grace found it quite agreeable to carry on adultery with his neighbor's wife, also regarded as a believing sister, while the neighbor was in church.[156] g) This fire, fanned into a bright flame first of all in the Mariopol District by the so-called brethren, spread rapidly among the members of the Separatist and Mennonite congregations. It consisted of this delusion: 'The free grace of God in Christ releases the believer from all previously existing ecclesiastical and human order, as well as from all strife against flesh and blood; the believer is free from the law and does not need to strive for sanctification of heart and life, for in Christ he is perfect, holy, and righteous before God, so that sin cannot harm his salvation in any way in this life or the next, since it is no longer the believer but only his flesh that commits sin; it is therefore totally impossible for a believer to be lost; children of God thus have nothing to pray for because they already possess everything; all that remains for them is to thank, to cheer, and be jubilant.'[157] h) Several church members demanded that I administer holy communion whenever they felt the need for it, separately for them and those whom they would designate as 'believers.' This I rejected as an inadmissible innovation which to my knowledge had never been practiced in the Mennonite Church and which would only foster spiritual pride and disturb the unity within the church. So they began to take communion in private homes together with some members of other congregations, maintaining that according to the teaching of the Scripture, and their conscience, they could not take communion together with the unbelievers in the church.[158] i) Thereupon they were repeatedly exhorted by the respective church-elders, the ministers, and the assembled brotherhood to refrain from their presumptuousness arising from pride. Not only were all remonstrances and exhortations utterly fruitless, but these blinded individuals went even further in that on January 6, 1860, they formally withdrew from the Mennonite brotherhood and declared frankly 'that they wanted no fellowship with this fallen church, which in its communion services and in everything else is serving the devil, so as not to fall under God's judgment with it.'[159] We here do not know of any alleged desire by the withdrawing

members, other than the one mentioned above, for a 'renewal because of the many prevailing practices concerning baptism and communion that are not in agreement with the teaching of Menno' [quoted from the *Friedensglocke*].[160] And a renewal according to their understanding and taste would have been inadmissible in any case. k) In Russia it is not up to the Mennonite church elders nor up to the individual churches or even the total Mennonite brotherhood to permit or deny the formation of new sects. This right belongs exclusively to the highest authorities in the land, who on the basis of the confession of faith submitted to them and the evidence given to them by the Prussian government [when? how?] granted a special privilege to the Mennonites. But this was not meant to open the door and gate to every conceivable fanatical sect among them. And so it became the duty of the church elders, after every effort to bring these members who had seceded back to order and sobriety had failed, to regard them as people not belonging to any Christian church organization and to report them as such to the Area Administration Office according to 2 Thess. 3:14. This was done by five church elders on January 18, 1860, with the request that the Area Administrative Office try to dissuade these seceders from their erring intention to form their own church of the saints. l) When the kind efforts of the Area Administrative Office failed as well, the Inspector of the Colonies summoned three men who had been designated as leaders by the seceded members to appear before him on February 10, 1860.[161] There the three personally signed a promise 'that they would not separate from the Mennonite church fellowship; that they would not perform any spiritual functions; and that in religious matters they would not undertake any step that was forbidden by the church leaders, unless they had first obtained an express authorization from higher authorities.' m) Heedless of their promise, the seceded members conducted an election of ministers on May 30, 1860, and reported to the church-elders on June 2 of the same year that in so doing they had now organized themselves as an independent church.[162] n) Since these seceded members, by virtue of the written promise made by the three leaders to the Colonial Inspector, had been returned by the latter to the supervision of the churches by a letter on February 10, 1860, sub No. 1194, they were called to account by the churches for their illegal election of ministers and for violating their promise. They were admonished to submit to all divine and ecclesiastical order for the sake of conscience. But the three designated as directors of the association claimed not to have violated their promise, and the rest declared that, 'they had promised nothing; one had to obey God rather than man; they could not act against their conscience, come what may.' o) All counterpresentations once again accomplished nothing, and consequently nothing else remained but for the brotherhood assemblies to decide what course of action the churches were to take. In the

Gnadenfeld congregation the decision was reached 'to excommunicate the seceded members from the church but without the ban,' that is, the civic association between them and the church members could continue. In the other churches the seceded members were punished with the full ban according to II Thessalonians 3. p) Those thus set apart ignored the punishment and gave no indication that they would reform. On the contrary, from that time on they conducted holy communion, sometimes in the presence of their elected ministers and sometimes without them. As a premliminary to the Lord's Supper they introduced mutual footwashing which to them means that the male sex washes the feet of the female sex and the latter those of the male sex.[163] Soon they also began to baptize each other by total immersion because in their opinion only that form is scriptural and valid. In their worship services disorderly and arbitrary things went on in that at random persons of any age and sex loudly voiced their opinions and prayed while others applauded with loud exclamations of 'Victoria! Gloria! Halleluja!' or voiced their approval of these things with hand-clapping, jumping, and loud laughing. All Christian devotional literature, books of sermons, Besser's *Bibelwerk*, Arndt's *Wahres Christentum* and the *Paradiesgaertlein*, Stark's *Gebetbuch*, and the like, were despised and rejected by them; writings which they disliked particularly were even burnt. Only the *Friedensglocke*, whose argumentation in 1860 had been in agreement with their own desires and thoughts about the relationship of believers to the church, and the *Missionsblaetter getaufter Christen* [Baptists], were and remained cherished periodicals in their midst. At times they made so much unnatural noise in their gatherings by shrieking (rejoicing), singing, music, dancing, and jumping, that neighbors and passers-by ran to see if human lives were in danger in the house. The most repulsive aspect of all this is that such wild, crude activities, not infrequently carried on through half or all of the night, during which the 'holy kiss,' as token of sacred brotherly and sisterly love, plays a major role, are considered by them the work of the Holy Spirit. q) Not satisfied with merely drawing new members from the Mennonite colonies to their fanaticism, a fanaticism that caters to the carnal, evil heart, they sent two youths who excelled in intellectual narrow-mindedness, conceit, and impudence, as apostles to the Lutheran churches in the Volga area in 1860. There these emissaries also succeeded in winning a not insignificant number of followers for their views and tearing them from the church. Pastor Doenhoff of the Gololubovka Church, as a result, felt obligated to write a series of pastoral letters which appeared in the 1861 and 1862 issues of the *Sonntagsblatt*, published in St. Petersburg by Bertholdi, formerly by Pastor Sieberg. These letters described the false teachings that had spread there and refuted them in a truly apostolic manner in accordance with Scripture.[164] The Saratov office for foreign

settlers on the Volga complained to our Supervisory Commission in Odessa about the mischief which the two apostles had created there and requested the latter to give strict orders to the Area Administrative Office of the Molotschna Mennonite District not to issue passes in future to persons of such character for that type of activity. r) After one of the two apostles had secretly led an immoral life for a period of time, one of his partners in sin eventually became mother of a child. Since Easter, 1862, they publicly live together as a married couple, having been joined in matrimony by their bishop.[165] s) The above-named Johann Claassen, the most decisive and fanatical representative of the sect, knowing that their disobedience and resistance to our government must eventually result in legal censure, suddenly went off to St. Petersburg in order to save his skin. There he knew of friends also in favor of establishing free churches. He hoped with their help to contact the highest authorities on behalf of his associates. The church elders and the Area Administrative Office did not thwart them in any way except that the Area Office, because of the instructions received from the Supervisory Commission, did not send him a monthly pass until receipt of specific permission to do so. t) Hopefully, from this presentation of the truth it will be clear to every unprejudiced reader that those members who have left us have no valid reason to complain about coercive measures and persecutions because of their faith and Christian living. And even if they should be punished according to law by the Russian government for successfully proselytizing a considerable number of members from the Russian state church, they could not boast of any religious persecution but would be suffering only the due reward of their deeds according to state and church laws and the Holy Scriptures, Romans 13:1-5 and I Peter 2:13-17.[166] No government, no church administration, and no law hinders us from believing and living a true Christian life here in Russia, according to God's Word and our privileged church constitution, as the 'quiet of the land' and we can be as happy here as is possible anywhere on earth. The only limitations set for us by the state and church laws concern the forming of new sects and proselytizing, which we undertook to observe as good and faithful Russian subjects when we were admitted. Whoever deliberately despises and defies all governmental and human authority in spite of this cannot complain when he receives the judgment he deserves. u) Likewise, the St. Petersburg reporter has no reason to lament that 'after the Mennonite clergy requested help from the secular government, imprisonment and other coercive measures were immediately employed and that this oppression and persecution not only did not relent but became more and more serious.' A few of the most impudent and brutal secessionist members were punished with a few days of detention in the Area Administrative Office, not because of their faith or their Christian life, but partly because they had acted contrary to their

promise given to the government, and partly because they were guilty of coarse and irresponsible slander against the church and its leaders. Thus they only received such punishment as would be meted out to any other crude and indecent person guilty of a similar offence, in accordance with the existing order for maintaining good discipline and morality. Moreover, those arrested were held only until they promised not to insult and slander the church and their superiors any more and to strive to be decent and moral citizens. v) Furthermore, this 'fellowship of living brethren,' as the reporter from St. Petersburg likes to call them, or 'the church of the saints,' as they like to call themselves, young as it is, has experienced severe fragmentation, in that they have already splintered into three or more parties who want no association with each other. w) Late in the summer of 1862, J. Claassen returned from St. Petersburg without having achieved his or his associates' objectives, except that he had finally succeeded in submitting a written complaint and petition to His Majesty, the Emperor of Russia. This document was soon sent by the Imperial Office to the Supervisory Commission in Odessa with a demand for a report to the Imperial Office concerning Claassen's activities in the colony, the reputation he has acquired in the Mennonite brotherhood, and the complaints he had handed in. The Supervisory Commission will no doubt have responded to this request and a resolution from the highest authority in St. Petersburg is now expected. x) In the meantime, Claassen and associates have once more begun to disturb the Sunday worship services in the villages of Liebenau and Wernersdorf. They appeared at the services, winked and smiled at each other during the singing and the sermon and addressed the congregation immediately after the service. The mayor's office of Liebenau remonstrated with Claassen and consorts and prohibited such disruptive conduct; but they believed they had a biblical right to do so and refused to promise obedience. Consequently, the Liebenau Mayor's Office felt obliged to report these persons to the District Office for disturbing public worship services. The latter office summoned Claassen and questioned him concerning the case, demanding answers in writing from him. These questions, along with Claassen's answers, were taken and presented to the higher authorities by a committee official, Mr. Keller,[167] who for some time has been present in the Prischib [Lutheran] Colony. Claassen, after he had completed his answers, was allowed to go home in peace, and neither he nor the others have suffered in the least so far. y) Having herewith described, as far as I thought necessary, the situation referred to in No. 2 of the *Mennonitische Blaetter*, to give our dear distant readers of this paper a true and reasonably complete picture, I want, with equal seriousness, to avoid giving the impression that in all other matters conditions are good in our Mennonite churches in South Russia, and that there is really nothing left to wish for. Oh, how much

dead nominal Christianity, how much selfishness and sinful striving for treasures and riches of this world and how little serious striving and struggling after imperishable heavenly treasures, which are gifts in Christ Jesus for a living faith! How much disunity and quarreling frequently over insignificant, trivial matters! How serious the ignorance of the most important matters concerning our real destiny! In a word, how much worldliness and how little other-worldliness must we lament among us! We have no right to boast of having an advantage in the eyes of the Lord over our sister-churches. Rather, we have every reason to bow in shame before the Lord, to humble ourselves, to ask Him to give repentance unto life to our dead members, and to those who have life, more unity in the spirit, more sincere brotherly love toward one another, more firmness in the saving knowledge of divine truth, more true humility of heart, and a glad willingness to work together to build God's kingdom. That all the dear readers who through blessed personal experience know the indescribable joy of being a child of God through faith in the precious work of Jesus, will lift up their hearts and hands to the Lord with us and call upon Him to give these gifts of grace to us and our fellow believers, is so natural that we expect it without a doubt. Therefore, let us heed the Lord's command, in spite of numerous crushing and discouraging experiences, to continue to throw out the net confidently in His name in the believing hope that our work will not be in vain in the Lord. Praise and honor be to the Lord, Who, in spite of all the lamentable shortcomings and infirmities on our part, does have those who are His own in our church, whom He calls by name and who know His voice, who follow Him and are not misled by those who do not have His voice in their heart and mouth! Praise be to God, Who, according to His sincere mercy, continues to call our local fellow-believers to Himself in love and in earnestness. Oh that His work of grace might succeed in softening many, yes, all those with hearts still unbroken, to make them sensitive and accessible for the blessed indwelling of the Holy Spirit! Indeed, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the lost members who have left our congregations is that the Lord might turn them from the error of their way and help them in good time to recognize their arrogant mind and to bring them to a genuine repentance before they plunge themselves and their children into temporal misery and ruin. In sincere brotherly love, united with you in the Lord, your August Lenzmann, elder of the Gnadenfeld Church."

II. This letter, though written in brilliantly precise language, is theologically and ecclesiastically one-sided, short-sighted, narrow-minded, and lacking in Christian love. It shall not be, as far as we are concerned, the ideal epitaph on the gravestones of the signatory and his secretary, the Minister Heinrich Franz, Sr. Both of them were worth much more

than this their letter, written in evil times, which betrays the fever that existed in the Mennonite body and from which it strove to expel the unhealthy fluids, and which expressed itself in the exaggerations of Lenzmann and associates on the one side, and those of the seceders on the other. The spume, the sediment, the dirt, and the bitter leaven must be separated during the fermentation; the strength of the wine remains. Our epitaph for Lenzmann and Franz shall be that which was said above in Chapter IX, "Gnadenfeld" and at the conclusion of Chapter XVII.

§169 14. Klaus, in *Our Colonies*, refutes Elder Lenzmann, p. 289: ". . . Meanwhile, the government finally became convinced that the accusations brought against the 'Huepfer' —that they were immoral, disobedient to the authorities, etc.—were in fact unfounded . . . ." (Compare above #160.)

§170 15. Pastor Dobbert's Report. Compare XII above, "Pastor Wuest" 2.d, and XVII. Our own copy of the following document bears the superscription: "Received from Minister Franz Isaak as authentic, in the spring of 1896, D. Schellenberg," [Elder of the M.B. Church, Molotschna, Rueckenau].

a) "A correct understanding of the religious movement which has emerged among the Mennonites during recent years, particularly the Claassen schism, is scarcely possible without going back a few years and considering the activities of a man who exercised an unusual and special influence here; I am referring to Pastor Wuest. When the Royal Consistory in Wuerttemberg effected changes in the liturgy and introduced a new hymnal, many wanted to preserve for themselves and their children that which had been transmitted to them. Russia befriended those who left their homeland for conscience sake and provided them with shelter. They settled on the Berda in four colonies and were granted the freedom to use their own books, among them the fine hymnal, and to use the old Latin liturgy (the 'articulus diaboli'[168] is not omitted here), and to elect teachers and ministers from their own midst. Nevertheless, despite the external peace and protection which it enjoyed abroad, the church did not become stronger in any spiritual sense. Quarrels and tension among smaller parties consumed its best strength all too soon, and finally it decided to call a minister from Wuerttemberg. Wuest was the man who heeded the call around 1845. b) . . . [Cf. XII above, 'Pastor Wuest,' 2.3, from . . . . 'It is' . . . to: . . . 'has remained.'] c) Such scenes did not appear among the Mennonites at that time. Indeed, Wuest's influence here was so unhindered and significant that the Gnadenfeld congregation was induced to dedicate their newborn children in the church.[169] d) As

mentioned earlier, quite vexing and deplorable confusions also occurred in the immediate vicinity of Wuest, a fact which will bewilder only those who forget that the Lord cannot build His little church without having Satan also erect his chapel alongside it. This man's compelling testimony concerning the Lord's love for sinners, concerning justification of the sinner by grace, was not really accepted by some in terms of its inherent purity. The Pauline teaching of grace was too narrow for the minds of these individuals; intoxicated by the spirit of false liberty, they entered upon a course in which Christianity could be abused as a cover for malice and sin, and forgot Paul's chastening words to the Galatians (Galatians 3): O you foolish Galatians, etc. At first Wuest patiently bore the error of his friends, who certainly expressed themselves towards him very cautiously, in the hope that the error could be overcome. However, when these rank weeds 'grew over his head' and these folk utterly refused to be instructed or convinced of a better way he excommunicated them because of their shameful error. [In one meeting at which he spoke of the healing and chastening grace of God, he was obliged to listen to numerous unkind speeches from this group, and even I had the opportunity to read, in later years, a letter dating back to this time, and addressed to a friend in faraway Barmen; this letter was filled with sorrow and pain because of those whom Satan had misled.] If through such earnestness Wuest demonstrated most clearly that he had acted with integrity, it nevertheless remains a fact that he occasioned the schism and separation of the so-called 'Huepfer' from the church. In their bitterness against Wuest, the latter were not ashamed to accuse him of attempted suicide by means of poison and roundly to deny a Pharisee such as he eternal life. e) The chief representatives of this free movement were: Claassen of Liebenau among the Mennonites, Hottmann among the Wuerttembergers, Kappes among the Evangelicals on the Mariopol Plan. It should be noted that Claassen and his adherents lived in manifest sins and abominations and celebrated the liberty of the Christian individual as well, although their excessive emphasis upon grace never did match that of the Wuerttemberg folk and the 'Huepfer' living on the Mariopol Plan. I have learned the truth concerning the latter groups from trustworthy individuals, particularly from sorrowing fathers who related the misery they experienced in their own families to me, but a more detailed account of these groups I am glad to leave to the pen of another. Since Claassen of Liebenau (thus named after his place of residence) belonged to the Gnadenfeld Church district the way was already prepared for new complications and conflicts in the Gnadenfeld congregation. This was true, although Elder Lenzmann, who was also intimately associated with Wuest, and, as he himself writes, confessed that the memory of brotherly fellowship in which he remained with dear Pastor Wuest until his transition from the

militant to the triumphant church, will always be a blessed one, certainly did not share the errors of that member (Claassen) and his following. Elder Lenzmann himself relates how he had to refuse the demand of some of his church members to extend holy communion to them, and to such as they would designate as believers, separately and as often as they desired it, since, according to the teachings of the Scriptures and their consciences, they could not take communion together with unbelievers in the church. [Among Mennonites two Sundays a year have been designated for the public commemoration of communion. The practice of providing holy communion at the bedside of the sick is unknown in some churches.] Because this demand involved an innovation which in turn disrupted the unity of the church, Lenzmann felt obliged to regard it as inadmissible. Subsequently, these members, to whom separate communion had been denied, observed it among themselves, and in private homes. f) This report makes it very plain that Claassen, as was the case amongst his followers, did not enter the battle with carnal weapons. He had openly announced and lamented the collapse of church discipline—the Achilles heel of the church—insisting that it be practiced again, a declaration to which he also gave brief expression in a document addressed to all the elders of the Molotschna Mennonite churches on January 1860: 'For the sake of our Lord and our conscience, we can no longer be a party to such action, for the obviously godless conduct of many cries to God in heaven.' Therefore he [Claassen] disassociates himself from these corrupt churches and possessing the same rights as those possessed by other churches, he desires to establish his own church based on the confession of Menno, a church in which such confession would acquire form and life. He rejects the present laxity in the practice of baptism and avows that baptism should be practiced upon the confession of a true and living faith, not upon the basis of a memorized faith. Communion is a witness to a covenant with God and to the union of the Lord with His followers, as also to that of the believers with one another (not a sign of fellowship of believers with unbelievers as it is now practiced?). As proof, Claassen cites the *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* by Menno Simons, Vol. I, p. 121, which reads: 'If anyone errs in doctrine or faith and is carnally-minded, he may in no wise be admitted to the company of God-fearing and repentant people, as I Cor. 5:11 and 10:20-21 teaches. According to Rev. 18:4 and II Cor. 6, secession is a duty and command. Furthermore, the ban is to be practiced in the future as well, but not in such a manner as is the practice in some churches (which is scarcely credible!), that it condemns those who confess and repent of their sins while unrepentant ones continue to live in sin unhindered.' Was Claassen right in making this demand? (Is his view an exaggerated one, and—as the majority of elders have alleged—one which originated in a one-sided interpretation of the

Scriptures? Does he contradict his own written confessions of faith? How was his speech finally received and what sort of answer was he given? Do the Mennonite confessions of faith and Holy Writ teach the errors of Claassen and his associates?) g) At a conference of elders, on January 18, 1860, the petition for recognition as a separate church was flatly denied, without any indication of reasons: 'permission cannot be granted.' Instinctively, one is led to ask: by what right do the other churches exist, each of whom has its own special hue? At the same time the Mennonite Area Administrative Office was asked to do everything possible to persuade them to give up their erroneous plans. The signatures of five elders grace this *testimonium paupertatis*. The signatures of the elders of Ohrloff and of the *Kleine Gemeinde* are missing. It is quite clear that, had the elders had an eye and an ear for that which, as an irrefutable and undisguised truth, was declared by their opponents, and had they begun to pave the way for the removal of abuses, an agreement would still have been possible, a schism would have been prevented, since the opponents had declared on January 23: 'Everyone would have preferred to have remained in his own congregation, but since the ministers do not act according to the Word of God, our consciences will not allow us to stay and so we wish to establish our own church as Mennonites.' Ought one to praise or even approve the fact that these people were turned over to the secular authorities in such an offhand manner? Why did the elders not rather judge the erring ones according to their own laws? When Pilate said to the Jewish leaders, 'Take him and judge him according to your own laws,' the Jews replied, 'We are not permitted to kill anyone.' Hopefully everyone will concede that for the purpose of preventing a separation, that assembly of elders chose the most unsuitable and unspiritual of means. They did not realize that by delivering Claassen and his companions to the Area Administrative Office, this premature action gave them the appearance of martyrs, an appearance which promoted the growth of fanaticism. h) In view of the above, the considered judgment of the Ohrloff Church, March 29, 1860, in response to a summons from the Molotschna Mennonite Area Administrative Office is all the more gratifying and refreshing. The disorderly celebration of the Lord's Supper in homes hither and yon is not at all sanctioned (Claassen's party accepted correction on this point from the Conference, and did not intend to continue the practice in the future.) Since, however, these people's yearning finds expression in the wish to establish their own church on the foundation and confession which is common to all Mennonites in order to be in a position to create a better church order, the Ohrloff Church cannot see how the whole affair could have harmful consequences, and considers the most prudent way of diverting these people from their intention for all of us to begin earnestly to conduct

ourselves according to God's Word, so that church order might be restored and the church thereby improved. The correct norm for the treatment of Claassen and his followers is also set forth with similar prudence in this document: If he and his adherents have sinned as members of the church, they ought to be separated from the church until they blush for shame. If, however, they are wrongdoers, violators of secular order, disobedient to the government, the church is to be silent, for the government does not bear the sword in vain. Unfortunately, the resolution passed by the Ohrloff congregation at Blumstein, March 29, 1860, was not further observed with any view to implementation. i) What were these 'all possible means' which the Area Administrative Office applied in order to dissuade these people from their wrong intentions? The Area Administrative Office applied article 362 of the penal code, which deals with secret societies, to this case and ordered the village mayor to see to it that no meetings of a religious nature take place in private homes. And when, as had been anticipated, nothing was achieved by means of this action, it became necessary to appeal to the inspector of the Molotschna Colony for advice. Johann Claassen, Abram Cornelssen and Isaak Koop were consequently called in for interrogation. The inspector pointed out the disorderly and illegal nature of their actions and invited them to apply for government recognition but to remain patient until such could be granted. And so, on February 10, they signed the document in which they promised not to secede from the Mennonite Church and not to undertake any steps in regard to religion which were prohibited by the church elders without the express permission of the higher authorities. At the same time the inspector demanded from all district and church elders a written answer to the following questions: 1. What is actually the essence of this movement? 2. What kind of harmful consequences for the Mennonite brotherhood as a whole could arise through this movement? 3. What disciplinary measure must be taken to bring about the dissolution of this movement, and is it necessary to treat the leaders as disturbers of the common peace and order? It cannot be denied that the inspector proceeded very cautiously; the government did not act according to any preconceived notions. Its questions reveal that it wished very much to avoid rash action. Only after acquring insight into the situation, to which insight the answers received from the church elders and the Area Administrative Office were to contribute, did they intend to take suitable action. But what kind of information did the inspector receive? At the moment I have in my possession the explanations of the Area Administrative Office and of the Association as well as that of the church elders. The explanation of the former reads: 'It is our opinion that, as far as the dissolution of this movement is concerned, one must proceed against the founders as well as against some of the most restless members as disturbers of the common

peace and order, according to law; however without taking their colony citizenship status from them, because the threat of corrective punishment could possibly lead them to the realization of their erring ways and cause them to turn about.' The explanation of the church elders was entitled, 'From all the church elders of the Molotschna District,' but bears only the signatures of five elders; two names are missing, both of whom disagreed with the explanation of the five elders of March 11, 1860, and submitted their private vote—the Ohrloff Church on March 25 and 29, 1860, and that of the *Kleine Gemeinde* on March 24, 1860—to the Area Administrative Office. k) A striking deception[170] appears to have taken place in that it is likely that the government never became aware of these documents; at any rate I did not find them among the documents which the inspector so kindly gave to me. And since the statement of the five elders, as the sequel makes clear, is so completely different in the perception and treatment of the sect in question from that of the other elders, the Area Administrative Office obviously bears the responsibility for the fact that the requests of the government were not fully complied with. If one were to argue that the majority of the elders ought in any case to decide this matter, then a precedent would be set which would upset all of our church practices; for in matters of faith numbers are not decisive but rather obedience to the Word of God. If, in respect to the consequent developments, one was so eager to report everything to the government—the documents supply proof thereof—which made the members of the new movement appear to be disobedient and disturbers of the peace, why was the government not granted clearer insight into the circumstances? For neither the separate vote of the churches [Ohrloff and *Kleine Gemeinde*], nor any explicit mention, reference to, or reiteration of the explanation of Claassen and associates, dated January 6, which is the first document in this matter, are to be found in the records. 1) If we examine the answers given by the five elders in reply to the inspector's questions, what do we find? The first question reads: 'What is the essence of this new religious movement?' The answer 'Their understanding, exposition, and application of the Scriptures are one-sided. They claim that their interpretation of individual Scripture passages is the only correct one and this is the reason why they have failed to respond to all correction and instruction.' (Do these words speak to the questions asked? All the different churches [Catholic, Protestant, etc.] make the same essential accusation about each other.) 'They do not respect any existing church order, considering the latter to be merely human statutes,' and as proof thereof they cite the matter of conducting holy communion in private homes. (In this version the statements give Claassen and his associates the appearance of extreme arbitrariness. Why was one not willing to add at least that, to be sure, church order, as measured against the

Scriptures and confessions of faith, had fallen into great disorder and because one did not want to admit this to Claassen, nor bring about change, he took refuge in such self-help for conscience sake?); 'to the point where they ultimately considered themselves to be the only true Christians, declaring with fearful arrogance and blindness the whole Mennonite brotherhood to be so corrupt as to have become enslaved to the devil.' That, then, is the nature of this schism! [171] The answer to the second question: 'What kind of harmful consequences could arise from this for the Mennonite brotherhood?' is given in the following version: 'A peaceful co-existence with them is unthinkable, and in the event that they should exist among us as a new and tolerated religious society, only offence and disorder would result. From past experience it is to be expected that, left to themselves, they would make all the more rapid progress in their fanaticism.' This assumption has been duly tested during the past several years. [172] 'It is also to be feared,' the version continues, 'that their unceasing activity in promoting their views will draw more innocent and well-meaning (!!!) people into the same fanaticism since they carry their endeavors on under the guise of truly Christian conviction.' How totally different is the judgment of the Ohrloff Church, which in no wise overlooks the disorder in connection with the Lord's Supper and other offenses (*Peccata*). [173] Regarding the dissolution of this society, the council [of the five elders, March 11] declared that it had employed all means available (from the point of view of church polity) to influence the erring ones, and this in all love and earnestness. (Can the above be true when Claassen submitted his document, signed by 17 associates, to the elders on January 6, and already on January 18 it was turned over to the Area Administrative Office so that the latter might do whatever it could in the matter? Can it be true when the last resort, the ban, had not yet been exercised against the erring ones?) Regarding the further treatment and punishment of them by the civil authorities, they 'do not want to offer any suggestions.' I have obviously given vent to my feelings about this document on a broad scale, but considered it necessary to do so in order to contribute to a proper understanding of the whole, for against the background of such an interpretation on the part of those who are to judge spiritual things spiritually, secession indeed became a serious matter of conscience for Claassen and his followers. m) On the other hand, one ought not to overlook that which was obvious error in the Claassen movement, its excessive zeal, which precipitated sin. If the declaration of February 10, 1860, which Johann Claassen, Abraham Cornelssen and Isaak Koop had signed at the inspectorate, contained more than they could, would, or wanted to admit, 'that we will not separate ourselves from the Mennonite Church and not undertake any religious actions whatever, take no steps of a religious character which are prohibited by

our church elders,' then they were certainly at liberty to refuse to sign it. In the event of transgression the government could rightly consider them to be disobedient, as people whom one cannot trust even if they had given their word. Did they not themselves call forth the punishing arm of the government when already on March 21 it was reported that Isaak Koop, disregarding the signature (referred to above) and against the will of the church elders conducted meetings with like-minded Mennonites, not only in his own home but also in the Rudnerweide Colony, and when the secessionists elected H. Huebert of Liebenau and Jakob Becker of Rudnerweide as ministers by majority vote in Gnadenfeld on the 29th [30!] of May in the home of Jakob Reimer? And when in plain insubordination to their government—the Area Administrative Office—which, reminding them of the February 10 document, prohibited any religious actions and any speaking or preaching at meetings, they replied through the village mayor's office: 'we will not obey the order of the Area Administrative Office,' what accountability did they then draw upon themselves? It makes one wonder to see ministers misuse Scripture in order to extenuate their plain disobedience, explaining, 'We too were elected by our church, which dissociated itself from the corrupt churches, in the document of January 6. (Is that reason enough for the existence of a separate church?)[174] Thus, we too feel called by God's Spirit (our God is a God of order and His Spirit does not induce disorder) and by Scripture (here the accusation of a one-sided and distorting interpretation of the Scriptures is pertinent), as was the house of Stephen which ordained itself to the service of the saints, I Cor. 16:15.' How provocative is the disobedience of Huebert of Liebenau when, in a statement of July 2, he announces, in the name of his fellow brethren, to the church elders collectively the recent election of ministers, and when he enclosed an election list and invites them for the following Sunday, July 1, to the house of Jakob Reimer in Gnadenfeld, 'where we want to lift up our hands and pray to the Lord God, Who came to save sinners, to the eternal Rock for blessings upon our ministers,'—an invitation, obviously, to the occasion of their consecration. Why did Claassen not, immediately after January 6, seek government recognition (which he was free to do)? This was, after all, his intention when he went to St. Petersburg (for the second time!) in November, 1860. Was self-help a justified action under the existing circumstances?[175] But those people are equally wrong who seek support for their movement, near and far, by means of their intrigues without further reflection on the matter: those who have admitted until very recently, as members, everyone who wanted to join, not only among Mennonites but also among people of other confessions. Ought they not to have secured ministerial approval first of all? The Mennonites B . . . r and H . . . l, and the Danish subject F. were such emmissaries who 'carried

on' their activity as far away as the Volga, in consequence of which Pastor Doenhoff of Gololubovka wrote his pastoral letters. And Elder Lenzmann concedes that one of those apostles, after he had led an unchaste life and his partner in sin finally had become the mother of a child, was married to her by their bishop at Easter, 1862, and that they have lived together as married people since then. What does Becker's statement mean in which he opposes the order of the Supervisory Commission to promise (in writing) not to leave the area of the Molotschna Mennonites—a very minor statute indeed—by asserting: 'because he believed according to God's Word he would do wrong in making such a promise since he did not know how God might lead him! We confess in our confession of faith that we are to go into all the world in order to bring the gospel to the nations, a possibility which would in the above case, be denied us;[176] neither could we make such a promise in view of our consciences, knowing that we have not acted against the government.' n) It is true that during the earliest years such devotional books as Besser's *Bibelerklaerung*, Arndt's *Wahres Christentum* and Starke's *Prayerbook* were burned. Their practice of baptism is striking, in that all of their members are rebaptized, whether they were once baptized or not—even those who, according to their own profession, had once received baptism on faith (the infant baptism of the church, naturally, is not even recognized), because immersion and not sprinkling is deemed to be the Scriptural mode of baptism. Therefore they baptize in streams or other still bodies of water on the steppes. I am unable to confirm oft-repeated rumors concerning acts of indecency at baptismal services. Reports which I have recently received from reliable sources inform me that a baptismal candidate is first subjected to a rigorous examination of his faith and after giving an affirmative answer to the question whether he is willing to endure everything for the faith, and, if need be, to forsake all—not to consider property nor blood—he undergoes the rite of baptism dressed in white clothing. If at first their worship services were tempestuous in character and the exposition of the Word was interrupted by Glorias and Hallelujahs and hand clapping by a few (they sing their songs in a rapid tempo, often to the accompaniment of a harmonica or violin), later reports attest much more orderly proceedings. Indeed, one must admit that after the first feverish heat was dissipated, more sobriety and discretion prevailed among them. o) Not these indicated aberrations but the essential truth (as already developed above) confronting the corrupt and disordered essence of the community out of which the so-called 'Huepfer' emerged, is the reason why their number increases even yet and why new members are constantly being prepared for baptism.

p) "Inadequate as the above summary may be, I have nevertheless sought to avoid everything which did not come to me from a reliable

source. If I have been able to contribute, by way of this work, to the Lord's Kingdom on earth, though it be only a little mortar and stone, I shall be happy. He himself will acknowledge that which His unprofitable servant has done, though in weakness. July, 1864. Dobbert, Pastor at Prischib."

16. Minutes of the Orloff-Halbstadt Ministers and Additional Material About the Meeting of the Secessionists. §171

a) Jacob Becker writes the following to Claassen (St. Petersburg) about the first attempts to bring order to the meetings for edification. "Rudnerweide, May 8, 1861. . . . (1) In Elizabethtal, where we met last Sunday, we read from I Cor. 14. We said chiefly that when the congregation comes together, it would be good if two people would place themselves in the midst of the group and read loudly to the rest, so that all could hear, even those sitting at a distance—and then also speak about it aloud. And if someone has a revelation, that person is to stand up and share his revelation with the rest, one after the other, so that all can be edified. If someone desires to praise the Lord in between, let him do so, even if five or six do so one after the other, for our meeting is increasing in size, filling the room and house (entrance way). Thus far we have always read around the circle, but some read so quietly that those in the back could not hear anything, and when there was any discussion they could not all hear either and so it did not take long until there was such a confused babel that no one could understand anything. That is why we made the following arrangements . . . so that the weak, too, who find themselves in our meetings, might be edified . . . . After we have been refreshed from the Word of God, we let forth our praise to God. Many times there is such an outpouring, hearts are so stirred, that one can not wait for the next, someone else steps into the pool of Bethesda first, and five or six are often praising together. Time often runs out on us when we begin to praise God, but praise God, there is a day coming which will be long enough. We also often think about you . . . . Do write to let us know whether you object to one of us going to them to preach according to their lesson guide [in the 'church' services in the schools: cf. further 17] . . . . (2) A child dedication service was conducted in your house [conducted—cf. #48—according to the Gnadenfeld manner, which was a rule in the young M.B. Church. It is frequently mentioned that Huebert or Becker 'embraced and dedicated' little children in the meetings]; the children of the Penners of Landskrone were dedicated, and those of Voth from Kakbas . . . . Jakob Becker."

b) Minister Jacob Martens, Tiegenhagen, of the Orloff-Halbstadt congregation, wrote to the publisher of *Mennonitische Blaetter* on

December 20, 1862: ". . . As a consequence of a number of letters received concerning Johann Claassen, who on this account is in St. Petersburg, the Area Administrative Office felt obligated to make a visit to Odessa. Several ministers of the church travelled in their company, carrying with them the statement of June 10, 1861 [above #103]. Prompted by this document, several ministers and members of the Orloff-Halbstadt congregation on several occasions made visits to the meetings of the secessionists, from which they sometimes put things down in writing. . . ." [*Mennonitische Blaetter*, Feb., 1863].

c) Mrs. Claassen, to her husband in St. Petersburg: "Liebenau, July 24, 1861 . . . . The ministers of the Orloff congregation notified us that if we were to come together this Sunday [July 23] in Liebenau and hold our worship service as usual, several of their ministers wanted to attend. . . . Harder [Minister Bernhard H.] made notes of the things said by Benjamin [Becker, ordained as circuit minister] and the others also . . . . A few also shouted for joy . . . . They also left us the statement [of the five elders of June 10] . . . . Harder expressed the hope that we might once more become one . . . . Katharina Claassen."

d) Jacob Becker to Claassen: ". . . July 31. Yesterday we again had a few visitors from the Orloff congregation at our meeting in Waldheim. . . . Isaak [Minister Franz I.] had a pencil and noted in detail how we conduct our meetings and mutual edification . . . . They will not always stand up to pray, though they do occasionally. It appears they have little to criticize us for. There was no shouting for joy yesterday, which seemed to please them more. I told them too that this was not a rule with us, that we only did it when the Spirit prompted us . . . . We will need to change our mutual edification somewhat from what it has been; thus far it has taken place only amongst ourselves for the strengthening of our faith. But we now have also those who have been revived, some who are searching and worldly persons, and for each there must be medicine, so that they too might be drawn into the fellowship. . . . Your brother in Christ, Jakob Becker."

e) First Minutes. "The undersigned attended a meeting on July 23, 1861, in Liebenau, in the home of Johann Claassen, presently in St. Petersburg, of those Mennonites who declared themselves separated from our churches. They began with singing. The song, 'Son of God, Lord of Glory' was first recited and then sung together by all, using the melody 'How Lovely Shines the Morningstar.' Thereafter their elected minister, Becker, stood to his feet and prayed a lengthy prayer, praised God for the salvation in Christ, praying for us too, that we might come to true enlightenment. This was followed by more singing from this point on, except for the closing song, using happy melodies, accompanied also by someone clapping his hands, while a number of others waved their

hands, made happy faces and uttered sounds which they called praise. After the song, Becker read I Cor. 2 and said some things about true simplicity and that a believer can recognize the faith of another through the Spirit of God; he also cast his eye upon our churches and preachers, saying that it was not enough to preach the Word of God down to the people from the pulpits; the Word must also be taken into the homes. The address was given in the Low German dialect [which did not begin to yield to the more appropriate High German sermon until 1866-67], and was interrupted or expanded a number of times by the observations of others. Song and prayer followed alternately, spoken once by this person and then by another, always having to do with the great joy in the faith and expressing the determination to be strong in the Lord even at a time of persecution. The suggestion was expressed that they felt called to carry the Christian message into the world. Benjamin Becker, brother of the earlier-mentioned Becker, mentioned that many Mennonites have never come further than to cry, 'Lord, have mercy!' when the Lord has already shown mercy and sent his Son in whom He wishes to give us all things, from whom we have all things as soon as we believe. Then another passage was selected, namely Psalm 87, and interpreted: how the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning a joyful time when there would be dancing, shouts of joy and the like, were to be understood quite literally as applying to the new covenant and had not been annulled by Christ. When we left, they told us quite openly that at times they conducted their worship service in a manner even livelier than this, with louder cries, music and leaping, as they are moved in a greater or lesser measure by the Spirit of God. Taken in general, we observed a freer movement than is customary in our worship services, but aside from the unusual expressions of joy, there was nothing that we found offensive. Church ministers: Aron Rempel [Schoensee], Franz Isaak, Bernhard Harder. Church members: Jakob Wiebe, Gerhard Wieler, Kornelius Knelsen, Jakob Franz, Heinrich Nickel, Gerhard Loewen."

f) Second set of Minutes. "On July 30, 1861, we attended a meeting of Mennonites who have withdrawn from our churches in the home of N. Strauss in Waldheim. For the opening they sang the song, 'Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying' (*Glaubensstimme*, No. 228). When the song was ended, they all stood for the prayer, which was loudly spoken by their minister, Jacob Becker, and was chiefly an expression of thanks, that God is betrothed to us for eternity and through faith, and that he wants to be wed to us in righteousness, justice, grace and mercy, and that we will one day recognize the Lord. Hosea 2:19, 20. Thereafter Becker read I Peter 1 and noted that we have already been born anew to a living hope, which is from faith. That verse 5 was to them a quite extraordinary comfort, was not due solely to the explanations and instruction of their

Minister Becker, for a most unusual joy radiated from nearly every face. It was also noted that the true, genuine joy and true love to the One who first loved us, could only really be experienced when we arrived in that eternal bliss, and that faith would only really be proven through trial. From verses 10, 11, and 12, attention was drawn to the blessedness of the new covenant, since it is in this that we enjoy the fulfillment of what the old covenant promised; though they did not forget to remind themselves concerning the words of the Apostle in 2 Tim. 3:12, that is, that all who wish to participate in this New Testament blessedness, or as the Apostle says, 'desire to live a godly life in Christ,' will be persecuted, and to encourage one another confidently to venture forth trusting Christ and His Word. They then sang, 'I Will Venture Forth' (*Glaubensstimme*, No. 362) and two brethren prayed loudly, one right after the other. The content of these prayers consisted of thanks to God for the redemption which He had brought about for us through his bitter suffering and His death on the cross. Other prayers which were voiced also dealt with the great joy in the faith, and after that they sang, 'Great is His Grace, Beyond our Understanding' (*Glaubensstimme*, No. 319, Vs. 3). After the singing of this verse, Becker began again from verse 13 of the text which had been read earlier, admonishing and teaching them to place their hope entirely upon grace, to look on Christ as the one and only one in their lives, and to demonstrate that they are children of God. He explained from verse 18 that all men are by nature sinners, and that we are born again by the Word of God. One of the brethren stood up to thank God in the name of all present for the precious Word He has given us, and for Sunday, which has been given us for edification in the Word, including Claassen, who is in St. Petersburg, also in his prayer. Still another brother stood up and in a childlike manner laid each one without exception upon the heart of Jesus, after which they sang in close accord, 'Sweet Jesus, thou who Art.' After this Becker prayed, asking the Lord, among other things, to touch his tongue for the proclamation of his precious (sweet) gospel, pleaded for grace for all, that all might one day enter into eternal bliss, thanked the Lord for all good things, and included Claassen as well in his petition, who is continuing on in St. Petersburg, praying that God might be his leader. Thereafter they sang, 'Our Hearts and Mouths Sing Praises' (*Glaubensstimme*, No. 317). After this song, Koop of Elizabethtal read Psalm 100, followed by some discussion; and Becker used I Sam. 4 to explain what rejoicing actually meant, and then supported by I Cor. 2, II Cor. 6 and II Thess. 3, spoke of the necessity of their secession. They then sang, 'What Wondrous Sweet Communion' (*Glaubensstimme*, No. 304). In all they sang two songs, using the melodies which are customary in our churches; the rest of the melodies were arrangements from the *Glaubensstimme*. Their expressions of joy consisted of small

movements with their hands and happy gestures. Although a number—not only Minister Becker—spoke up from time to time, this in no way disturbed the order, rather it served much more to provide a well-rounded exposition of the biblical text and witnessed, to the greatest extent, a Christian naivete. As we stood outside the house before leaving, and exchanged a few words with Becker and a number of others, the congregation sang several more verses accompanied by a flute. During this exchange, we came—amongst other things—upon their unusual expressions of joy, which we explained as an error, telling them that if this was a work of God they (the expressions of joy) should be allowed to fall away, for which they had no reply. Church ministers: Cornelius Penner, Franz Isaak; Deacon: Dietrich Huebert."

g) Third set of minutes. "On August 20, 1861, we attended the meeting of the Mennonites who have seceded from our churches, gathered at the house of Abraham Peters in Ladekopp. The first song was accompanied by harmonica and violin, but not in stormy fashion. Songs out of the *Glaubensstimme*, Hiller's *Liederkaestlein*, and Gossner's *Schatzkaestlein* were read out and sung according to the melodies indicated in the *Glaubensstimme*. The discussion of the Scripture texts, particularly I Peter 2, this time was conducted mainly in the form of dialogue led by their minister, Becker. Special emphasis was placed on the obligation of the Christian to put away evil and to strive after the good [compare this with Elder Lenzmann's letter]; but this would be possible only if the heart is renewed by faith. With great earnestness they warned against secret shame, specifically mentioning the vice of onanism. Their songs, among others, included: 'O, the Great Joy,' 'Once I Was Not a Child,' 'One Thing I Wish Above Everything Else,' 'Up, You Hearts United With Jesus!' etc. There was much prayer, by many different persons. But disturbing shouts did not occur; on the contrary, seriousness prevailed among them and was maintained by the leading persons, so that we were convinced that earlier testimony concerning them was either groundless, or at least exaggerated, or else these people must be well on the way to regulatory and corrective behavior. In this regard the other churches could serve them better by continued visits and appropriate encouragement, than by forcible means, which in any case would take a direction that could have incalculable consequences for the whole church. We noticed no deviations outside the limits of tolerance assigned to us by the highest authority; much less any transgressions against public order. They also conducted communion in our presence, with Becker, after a short talk on Luke 22:14-32, simply distributing bread and wine, while speaking the words of institution. Only members in the narrowest sense participated, and everything transpired in a quiet, orderly manner. Church ministers: Abraham Isaak, Jakob Martens, Bernhard Harder, Franz Klassen.

Deacon: Peter Friesen. Church members: Gerhard Loewen, Isbrand Harder, Jakob Harder. Note: When they made the promise in No. 5 [Feb. 10, 1860], they had believed that they would soon be recognized as their own church; but when the opposite developed more and more, they could not in good conscience, according to their own statement, keep the above promise any longer, but thereafter regarded themselves as an existing church and conducted election of ministers, baptism, and communion by themselves, and later also marriage ceremonies."

h) These three sets of minutes were printed in the *Mennonitische Blaetter*, February, 1863. The "regulatory and corrective behavior" regarding the conduct of services by the "brethren," here truthfully attested, was, as we know, overturned once more in a sad manner for half a year during the winter of 1864-65, as documented in "C" below.

§172 17. A Further Set of Assembly Minutes!

a) "To the Honorable Molotschna Mennonite Area Administrative Office at Halbstadt. Report from the office of the village mayor of Liebenau. The Liebenau mayor's office begs to report that the local resident Johann Claassen attended the worship services in the school here in Liebenau on January 1 and January 13;[177] immediately after the service he got up and urged the church members to remain behind, since it was necessary to talk some more about salvation; he did so knowing, as he had been told earlier, that he was to discontinue such scenes, since the church could not sanction them. After being reported for disturbing the peace in the church service, as stated above, he was taken to account by the mayor's office and told to discontinue[178] the said episodes, whereupon he stated that he would not let any one forbid him to do so, adding the comment that he would continue. So we have no alternative but to ask the honorable Area Administrative Office to consider our request to prohibit Claassen from carrying out said disruptions, in order that we no longer be disturbed in our worship services by Claassen or other persons belonging to his sect. No. 8, Liebenau, January 21, 1863. Mayor Schroeder. Council-member Schmidt. Council-member Neufeld."

b) "Memorandum. January 30, 1863. Present: Area Director David Friesen, Area Council member Johann Wiens, Area Council member Klaas Wiebe. After hearing the report of the Liebenau mayoral office No. 8, of January 21, concerning the disturbance of the worship service in the school there by the Mennonite Johann Claassen, the latter was asked to appear on today's date, and after being orally interrogated, was asked to respond to the following questions in his own handwriting: 1) Whether he, Claassen, had really, as reported by the village office, stood up in the Liebenau school on January 1 and January 13, after completion of the worship service, and had asked the church members to remain behind,

since it was necessary to speak more about salvation, even though he knew, and had been told, to discontinue such incidents? 2) Whether, after being reported for this and asked to appear at the mayoral office, he had said (that he) would not discontinue [179] that kind of act? 3) How far he feels called to give lectures when only the spiritual teachers of the Mennonites do this in the pursuit of their official duties according to their doctrines and in accordance with his own quotation of #3, of the Instructions for the Establishment and Administration of the Colonies (now Articles 1104 and 1105, Part 1, Volume XI, 1896 edition of the Code of Laws), and it is not known that Claassen has been elected as teacher in keeping with the practices of the Mennonites? 4) Whether, since he has been in St. Petersburg, he can present any document from higher government authorities, authorizing him to give lectures according to existing civic and Mennonite regulations; if he does possess such a document, why has he not presented it long ago; and if he does not, who has appointed him."

c) "Answers of the Mennonite Johann Claassen to the submitted questions: To the first question: On January 1, I calmly participated in the worship service and listened attentively to what was said. After the service had entirely concluded and our Mennonite brethren wanted to go, I got up and asked the congregation whether I could say something, received the permission, and spoke especially to the minister who had given the lecture, and commented on the sermon that we also ought to act accordingly, etc. On the 13th of January I again attended the service in the school, quietly and without the slightest disturbance, and after the complete conclusion of the service I asked that those wanting to discuss further with us the way to salvation should remain. With those who remained I read the 2nd chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, which calls upon us to work out our salvation with all seriousness. Thus I did no more create a disturbance than on January 1. The mayor's office has no grounds to accuse me of causing a disturbance. The mayor's office itself confirms in its report No. 8 of January 21, of this year, that I got up only after the worship service. How then could it be possible for me to have disturbed the service when it had already ended? To the second question: On account of this period of edification which we had after the completed worship service in the school building, I was called before the mayor and questioned whether I intended to continue disturbing the services? I said no, I had not disturbed them, and was not going to do so in the future; but edification in the Word of God together with our Mennonite brethren, this our ministers themselves were preaching, and we could not allow ourselves to be forbidden to do so. For the Word of God and Mennonite teaching, which firmly bases itself on the Word of God, demands that we build ourselves up on the most holy foundation of faith, e.g. I Tim. 2:8; I Thess. 5:11; Jude 20. Because, as is well known, we Mennonites call

ourselves a brotherhood, such edification, as mentioned above, is part of the meaning of brotherhood. Unfortunately, however, we behold that our Mennonite brethren have been corrupted to such an extent that the mayor's office turns it into an indictment and seeks to undermine the only foundation on which a brotherhood can exist. To the 3rd question: If the ministers of the Mennonites carry out their official duties according to their doctrines of faith, then we are to consider such ministers who rule well, worthy of double honor, according to I Tim. 5:17. But when the opposite can be proved about them, and, much more, when they lord it over brethren, which they are forbidden to do according to I Peter 5:3, II Cor. 1:24, then we have the duty to admonish such ministers, who also are our brethren. But if they refuse to accept such admonition, we are not forced to follow such ministers because they act contrary to the Christian teaching and seek honor for themselves. In this case we have to act as we are commanded in God's Word according to II Cor. 6:17-18; Rev. 18:4; Isaiah 52:11. Because we are seeing the ruin of our brethren we have the duty to warn and admonish in season or out of season, for they are our brethren according to the flesh; and if we do not do so, we lose our own soul, Ezekiel 3:17-21. According to basic Mennonite teaching a person has the right to teach even though he may not have been called by men, as I can prove from Menno's *Foundation*, Book 1, page 148: 'According to Scripture, the sending and calling of Christian ministers occurs in two ways: some are called by God alone without human co-operation, as happened with the prophets and apostles; others are called through the assistance of those who fear God, as can be seen in Acts 1:4; I Tim. 3; Titus 1.' To the 4th question: I have brought no document from St. Petersburg except a letter from the Minister of War to the Count Jevdokimov in Stavropol, which I delivered by my own hand. Since the main guideline for Mennonites is the Word of God, we find in it our rules of conduct: I Pet. 2:9; James 4:17; Eph. 4:11 and 6:14-15; Gal. 1:1; I Thess. 5:11; Amos 7:15; I Cor. 14:26-32. I appeal to point 1 of the imperial letter of privileges [cf. #55]. Finally, we say, 'Because we believe, we speak.' January 30, 1863. Johann Claassen." d) Compare Elder Lenzmann's letter above (x). Whether there was a reply from the higher governmental authorities to Mr. Keller's presentation, is not known. On the same subject the diary of Jakob Reimer, Gnadenfeld, says: ". . . On Monday, January 21, a letter came from Mr. Keller from which was read to us [in Gnadenfeld at the mayor's place] that no layman was permitted to conduct any spiritual action or to give any explanations or comments while reading the Holy Scripture, unless he had permission from the consistory. [Excerpt from the Lutheran Church Law in Russia, Volume XI, Part 1. Cf. above the footnote on Elder Lenzmann's letter, X.] Oh, that made the dead Christians happy and almost everyone gladly signed that he had

heard it read. On January 30 Br. Claassen had to appear at the Area Administrative Office where he was to respond to Mr. Keller on 4 points by Saturday, which he did. This referred to the fact that Br. Claassen had, on two successive Sundays after the church service in Liebenau, said: 'Brethren, whoever would like to talk more about his salvation, should stay.' "

B. *Documents Pertaining Mainly to the Kuban Settlement* (Supplement to #109)

1. First Journey to the Kuban. §173

a) Johann Claassen, in a letter from Tiflis, on April 19, 1866, writes to the Kuban M.B. Church: ". . . In August of 1862 six of us brethren journeyed to Stavropol and inspected the landed properties on the Kuban River where we now live . . . ."

b) Jakob Reimer, Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld, "Reports"[180] 1864: ". . . But in the hope that the Lord would be with us, we started on our journey on August 15, 1862, in two wagons: from the Old Colony Br. Johann Isaak and Gerhard Wieler; from here, Claassen, C. Reimer, and the writer hereof; we had Johann Strauss as our driver, three horses were hitched to each wagon, and all of us were happy and healthy. After eleven days, on Monday, August 26, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon we arrived in Stavropol in good health and spirits, and took lodging in an inn. We thanked the Lord for graciously accompanying us. Now we looked up the gentlemen to whom Br. Claassen had been directed from St. Petersburg with letters of recommendation. On Monday, Sept. 2, we journeyed out to inspect the two parcels of land from which we were to choose; for the trip two Cossacks from Otradnaia were assigned to accompany us as guards; we had to ride through the Urup, a rushing river where the water went over the horses' backs. We also met some Catholics [German colonists] who were living in huts abandoned by the Nogai; they told us that a year and two months earlier a boy of theirs had been kidnapped by Tscherkessians."

c) "Certificate [translated from the Russian]. This is given to Claassen and Wieler, the agents of 150 families of Mennonites of Ekaterinoslav and Molotschna, concerning the parcel of land on the left bank of the Kuban, extending from the mouth of the Great Selentschuk along the Kuban up to the Staniza Nikolaievskaia, which they have inspected and found suitable for settlement by the said families; thereupon, if it proves to be possible, presentation shall be made in May, 1863, to allot, on the said piece of land, sixty-five dessiatines of land per family of emigrating colonists, ten thousand dessiatines in total, for their

full possession. This I certify with my signature and the impression of the Royal Seal. No. 2310. Stavropol, September 15, 1862. Chief-of-Staff of the Army in the Kuban Region: Major-General Sabuzky." (Seal.) d) Johann Claassen, April 19, 1866: ". . . On September 15 we received a certificate from the Stavropol Authority." Jakob Reimer, ". . . On September 15, at two in the afternoon, we left Stavropol for home, pleased and in good health; on Sept. 24 we arrived in Gnadenfeld . . . where together we thanked God at my house. . . ."

§174 2. Obstacles Placed in the Way of the M.B. Church by the Molotschna Area Administrative Office.

a) "To the most honorable Supervisory Commission concerned with the foreign settlers in South Russia: A most humble submission. On October 4 of this year, Johann Claassen, a member of our congregation, was requested to appear before the Mennonite Area Administrative Office of Molotschna, and in their presence and that of the Agricultural Society was asked to give a report on the success of the trip of our delegates to the Kuban District. Claassen mistrusted the Area Administrative Office because up to that point it had always been working against the interests of our church. And because even now, during the discussion, the colony administrative officer became very vehement, threatening Claassen with imprisonment if he refused to present in writing what had been requested; and, in general threatening to see to it that we would lose our status as bona-fide colonists, Claassen feared to entrust the report of the Kuban journey to the Area Administrative Office without having first consulted his own church. Once the church had considered the matter, it felt constrained to present the above as well as the *Promemoria* to the Supervisory Commission in humble obedience. Enclosed herewith is also the testimony received from Major-General Sabuzky, which we wish to present to you. Furthermore, we must add that the church has no confidence in the Area Administrative Office because, as it has done in other cases, it could place obstacles in the way of an eventual exodus from the Molotschna District. Abraham Peters,[181] David Claassen [the oldest brother of the delegate], Johann Claassen [David C.'s son], Peter Stobbe, Peter Martens, Heinrich Nickel, Benjamin Becker, Peter Nickel, Johann Claassen [the delegate], Cornelius Reimer, Johann Claassen [nephew of the delegate], Cornelius Knelsen, Simon Harms, Johann Huebert, Peter Dyck, Johann Martins, Cornelius Penner, Jakob Reimer, Dietrich Claassen [older brother of the delegate], Bernhard Penner, Johann Strauss, Friederich Strauss, David Duerksen, Abram Dyck, Franz Claassen, Isaak Koop, Abraham Wiens, Cornelius Wiens, Heinrich Flaming, Abraham Regier, Heinrich Neufeld, Dietrich Claassen [Dietrich

C.'s son], Bernhard Janzen, Martin Klaassen, Jakob Kroeker, Abraham Wiens, Wilhelm Loewen. The ministers of the church: Heinrich Huebert, Jakob Becker. Dated October 10, 1862, Colony Liebenau."

b) "*Promemoria* [re the above submission]. On July 4 our church member Johann Claassen was ordered to appear before the Area Administrative Office and requested to report on what he had been able to accomplish in St. Petersburg, which he did in a few words. He also showed the letters from the honorable Minister of War to Graf Evdokimov and requested a travel permit to the Kuban in order to visit that district. However, because the colony administrative officer was sick and not in his office, Claassen was asked to come at another time and deal with the administrator himself about the travel permit. On July 24 Claassen returned to the office and requested a travel permit to the Kuban. This time, however, he was asked to appear at the Area Administrative Office on August 1 along with five other brethren. On August 1 these men were asked by the Area Administrative Office whether they wanted to return to their original congregations or not [!!!]. They declared that for the sake of their conscience they could not do so. After that Claassen requested (for the third time) a travel permit to the Kuban. To this he received a firm negative reply. On August 4 Claassen made the fourth journey to the same office, this time equipped with a supporting document (under #107) from the village office of Liebenau, which stated that as far as the village of Liebenau was concerned nothing stood in the way of granting Claassen a two-month travel permit. He also had a statement from the minister of our church [Heinrich Huebert] addressed to the Area Administrative Office requesting a two-month pass. But in spite of both documents, a travel permit was summarily denied. He was now advised that if the elders of the church would give their permission to the request for a travel permit, then he would be given one. At the close of the meeting the administrative officer mentioned that Claassen could also attend the Conference of the Elders which was to take place on the following Thursday, August 9, in Alexanderwohl. When Claassen presented a written request to the elders at the Conference on August 9, that they not place any difficulties in the way of his receiving a travel permit, they returned the request with the explanation that the granting of passes and travel permits did not come under their jurisdiction but rather that of the Area Administrative Office. The elders from the Ohrloff congregation and the *Kleine Gemeinde*, Harder and Friesen, however, declared that they could see no reason why the elders as such should have anything against the granting of such passes or permits. On hearing this, the other elders remained silent. The administrative officer, however, now feeling compelled to issue monthly travel passes for the

trip of the delegates to the Kuban, nevertheless declared in a very abrupt fashion that permits would be available for 28 days only. On August 11 Claassen made his fifth journey to the Area Administrative Office in order to pick up the promised permits from the officer. He was now told, however, that it would be better for him to pick up the permits just before the time of departure. Every time Claassen had to make a round trip of 44 versts [22 versts from Liebenau to Halbstadt]. Thereupon Claassen left for home once more, still without the travel permits. On August 15 Claassen finally received a permit for a month. At the same time and for the same purpose two other brethren were to receive permits: Abraham Wiens from Elizabethal and Simon Harms from Liebenau. The latter had requested a supporting document from the mayor's office in Liebenau. However, this was denied him because the Rudnerweide Mennonite Church had excommunicated him (Harms) because of his new faith. The mayor insisted on a document of permission from the elder of the Rudnerweide Church. Harms, who had paid all district levies for the current year and [for whom] there were in fact no obstacles in the way of his leaving the colony, requested that the mayor at least give him a written statement to this effect. But even this was refused him, and thus Harms was not able to take part in the journey to the Kuban. Another person had to be selected in his place—one who had previously belonged to the Gnadenfeld congregation. Gnadenfeld, however, had rescinded the ban it had placed on all the members who had joined our church (it had probably not imposed the ban in the first place?). Along with Harms, Abraham Wiens was also forced to stay at home because of the ban. Thus our church is constantly reminded that the elders of the church as well as the area administrative officers and the village mayors attempt to damage our cause at every opportunity and wherever they can, and to keep us in subjection even though we jointly [NB] enjoy the same privileges in Russia. Everyone appeals to and places the blame upon everyone else, as the contradiction between the church elders and the administrative officer makes apparent. In the meantime we suffer many hardships: politically we are not given the rights of free citizens; our domestic economy has been severely curtailed because travel and trade both within our district and to points outside have been adversely affected; and our attempt to purchase land elsewhere has been made extremely difficult because the local administrative office as well as the church elders will not allow our members to obtain any travel passes, or if they do, only after a great deal of trouble, as the above makes clear. In like manner the Area Administrative Office seeks to hinder us in our religious affairs. This has been recently demonstrated by the Administrative Office in that it gave a verbal command to the village officers at Elizabethal to hinder the marriage of our Minister Jakob Becker with the

step-daughter of Franz Klaassen of Elizabethal (a member of our church), which was to take place on September 30 in Elizabethal, a command that was obeyed. Later Becker was detained for a whole week in the Rudnerweide Colony under police supervision, and the Area Administrative Office sent a written statement to village officers directing them to make every effort to hinder marriages between members of our church. [Compare XVII, 'Marriage.'] The ministers of the church, Heinrich Huebert, Jakob Becker. October 10, 1862, Liebenau Colony." [A further comparison should be made with the document of December 30, 1863.]

3. Further Difficulties and Travels in Connection with the Kuban Settlement. §175

a) Johann Claassen, in a letter dated April 19, 1866: ". . . In May, 1863, I travelled with Abraham Unger to Stavropol, but was not able to accomplish anything because no written information had been received as yet. In June I travelled with Peter Berg to Stavropol and Tiflis . . . . On Tuesday [June 25] we arrived at Tiflis. . . ."

b) Benjamin Becker in a letter to Claassen and Peter Berg, received in Stavropol: "Liebenau, June 18, 1863. [At the request of Jakob and Cornelius Reimer he suggests that if the land purchase in the Kuban does not work out satisfactorily, he should arrange to rent land.] Dear brother, do remain in good spirits and do not become discouraged on that account as you work for the Lord and the brethren, for your reward in heaven will be great. We can never repay you for the good you are doing on our behalf . . . . Here, dear brother, we want to show compassion to your wife and children and make every effort, as best we can, to see that they will be well looked after while all this trouble is still with us. . . . Benjamin Becker."

c) Johann Claassen, April 19, 1866: ". . . On July 12, 1863, our written petition was presented to the Grand-Duke, his Imperial Highness Michael Nikolaievitsch, and granted by him. General H. von Karzov congratulated us . . . that our request had been granted, and that each family was to receive 65 dessiatines of land. . . . On July 18 we left Tiflis and arrived in Stavropol on Saturday, July 27 . . . . Berg left on July 29 . . . it was my lot to wait again . . . . On August 15 I presented our plan [of settlement] to the count . . . . On the 19th I received the Certificate No. 2266 . . . . On August 20 I left Stavropol and arrived back home in the Molotschna on the 28th . . . ."

d) "Certificate. [Translation from the Russian.] That the Ekaterinoslav and Molotschna Mennonites, who expressed the desire to settle on the left bank of the Kuban opposite the Staniza Nevinomysk, have really

been alloted appropriate parcels of land by His Imperial Majesty the governor of Caucasus, I attest with my signature and imprint of the imperial seal. No. 2266, Stavropol, August 19, 1863. Chief of Staff of the Kuban army, Major General Sabuzky." (Seal.)

e) Letter of Johann Claassen, April 19, 1866: ". . . On September 23 [1863] I again travelled . . . to Stavropol and arrived there on October 8. I had been sent, firstly, to arrange for some sort of accommodation for the cattle [which other brethren were driving there]; and, secondly, . . . to gain confirmation of the precise borders of our land. I made a request to the Grand-Duke. In Stavropol I received a copy of the Certificate No. 2746 that had been mailed to the Molotschna Colony . . . ."

(Translation of the Russian original): "Army Headquarters, Province of Kuban, General Staff, 2nd Division, October 2, 1863. No. 2746. Stavropol. To the delegates of the Molotschna and Ekaterinoslav Mennonites who have expressed a desire to settle on the banks of the Kuban River: Attention: Johann Claassen. Please be advised that His Imperial Majesty has ordered the commanders of the army to set aside a tract of land on the Kuban River for the Mennonites from the Molotschna and Ekaterinoslav, who, numbering 100 families, have expressed a desire to settle in the Caucasus. The tract of land is on the left bank of the river Kuban, downstream from the mouth of the Selentschuk River, in the amount of 65 dessiatines per family. The army commanders of the Kuban Province hereby order you, as deputy of the Mennonites, to let all prospective settlers in the group know that 6500 dessiatines of land has been set aside for them and that those who desire to settle in their new district may do so at once. Chief of Staff, Major-General, Sabuzky."

f) Claassen's letter, April 19, 1866: ". . . On October 10 I received a letter from the General Staff to the effect that we have permission to graze our cattle on our land, etc. . . ."

§175(2) g) Petition of the Brethren in the Molotschna to the Ministry of Crown Lands, December 30, 1863. a) It solicits the repeal of civil and ecclesiastical restrictions, especially the impediments placed in the way of marriages and migration to the Kuban. The appended *Promemoria* contains an explanation of all the important moves and oppressions of the M.B. Church since its organization with written documentation (including the *Promemoria* for submission to the Supervisory Commission on October 18, 1862) up to and including the Certificate of October 2, 1863, No. 2746 and the circular of December 7, 1863, No. 12652 (cf. #110 above). The petition is signed by the same 58 brethren whose names appear at the end of the following *Promemoria*. Original signatures on our copies. b) "*Promemoria.*" (After quoting the

correspondence from Elder Harder dated November 12, 1862, cf. #108a above, it reads:) ". . . But the other elders demanded that their respective congregations consent to our exclusion from the colonial status, which they, however, did not do.[182] [Concerning Gnadenfeld, cf. #108c, the *Kleine Gemeinde* maintained a friendly neutrality, and Ohrloff was protective.] This act established our essential recognition as a separate Mennonite church; but we were deceived. For although the Area Administrative Office received the October 2, 1863, certificate #2746 from the Caucasus board on November 30, 1863, when Claassen reported on the results of his last journey to Stavropol and Tiflis, they made the following negative declarations against Claassen. They said they wished to expedite our resettlement and wanted to be helpful, so Claassen should hasten to submit a list of families wishing to resettle at the Kuban. Thus they gave the appearance of wishing us well and indicating that we had no reason to be distrustful. But[183] soon thereafter, on December 7, 1863, the Area Administrative Office issued circular No. 12652, the text of which is given [in *#110* above, 'Marriage']. . . . c) On December 13 Claassen received the December 11, 1863, order of the Area Administrative Office, No. 12780, through the Liebenau village administration, ordering him to revise his settler list to conform to the above-mentioned circular. We could not do this for conscience sake, since we honestly regard the marriages performed in our church as in the Lord and entered them in the register as duly constituted families. d) Furthermore, in the order frequently referred to, indeed, at the request of the higher colonial administration, Claassen was required to be deputized in such a way as to authorize him to function in the interest of our church in a manner similar to that which has been the practice to date. We cannot explain this demand for deputization. [There follows an exposition of the well-known obstacles the Area Administrative Office used to prevent Claassen's formal deputization; cf. Petition to His Majesty, May, 1862] . . . . Thus Claassen, from the time when we first sent him to plead our case in 1860 [so say the brethren in a document submitted to the Area Administrative Office on December 30, 1863, referred to in the *Promemoria*] to the submission of our petition directed to His Majesty, our most gracious Tsar, as well as later, even to this day, has functioned as our deputy in oral and written negotiations without[184] a confirmed deputization (because we requested such a confirmation of deputization from the municipal council in vain). This fact is well known to the Area Administrative Office as well as the Supervisory Commission. Due to his negotiations, our concern regarding the hoped for and requested resettlement from the present place of residence to the Kuban, has succeeded to the extent described in what follows. [Narration of events from the receipt of the document from the Minister of War to Count Evdokimov up to the receipt of the document

of October 2, 1863.] Should the Area Administrative Office now be ready to confirm our deputization of Claassen, we would not neglect to apply at once. e) [Returning to the order of the Area Administrative Office, dated December 7, the petitioners continue . . . .] 1. In its order the Area Administrative Office calls us a newly established sect. We already rejected this charge in our petition of December 27, 1860, to the Supervisory Commission [cf. *#99* above]. 2. The Area Administrative Office continued in its circular: 'before their new sect will be recognized by the higher authorities and our entire council of church elders, etc.' Our answer to that is: a) that there can be no doubt as to our recognition by the higher and highest authorities is clearly and easily evident from point 1 of the most gracious royal invitation extended to us: 'We affirm the promise of religious liberty promised to you and your descendants, whereby you may observe your doctrines and ecclesiastical practices unencumbered.' And b) regarding the recognition by the entire Council of Church Leaders, we reply: that Mennonites have never[185] held to a consistorial system of church government. Especially that we should now need the recognition of the elders of the local churches for our existence as a church, we find neither in the Old nor New Testament. Rather it is written in the Old Testament: 'If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.' Jeremiah 15:19. And in the New Testament it is written: 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them' (Eph. 5:11). In short, with regard to our right to establish a church, we have set forth our arguments in the *Promemoria* to His Royal Majesty, the most gracious monarch. Menno Simons' *Foundation,* Book 1, Page 148 speaks 'Of the commissioning of ministers' [Cf. *#172c,* above], which Claassen clearly explained in answering the summons of the Area Administrative Office. We preached the Word of God, and through the preaching of the Gospel an evangelical church has come into being, which according to the Word of God has teachers, deacons, helpers and rulers. Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:28. f) Believers who have been baptized into one body upon confession of their faith by immersion in water, who have judged themselves so that they be not judged, receive the Lord's Supper. Marriages take place in the Lord, according to the Word of God, as stated in the Confession of Faith of the Anabaptist Mennonite Church, Article 10, on Marriage [cf. #108a. Harder's Document of November 12, 1862]. g) Hereby we think we have proved that our church is founded on a biblical basis, not on one of our own choosing, corresponding precisely with the foundations of Menno Simons and consequently[186] with the Word of God. Thus the elders have nothing to fear on our part, other than that their ungodly and shameless actions will be brought to light by us. We believe and

recognize that we are Mennonites to whom the privileges pertain and who live according to the rights granted to us. h) Therefore the Area Administrative Office and the Council of Church Leaders referred to must consider that it is not in their power, and is an amazing presumption on their part, to declare that marriages performed in our church are invalid, and that the children born to the same are to be regarded as illegitimate by the village administrations. 1) But that this explanation was an arbitrary action on the part of the church council, and that the Area Administrative Office circulated an order in all the villages of the Molotschna District, completely contrary to our rights, must be regarded with great astonishment by the authorities. And that the Area Administrative Office and the church council, blinded by their ill-will, only seek to harm us, and disguise all conferences, resolutions and orders with a veneer of goodwill and [good] intentions, is evident. At the October 11, 1862, conference in the Area Administrative Office attended by the church council [cf. document of November 12, 1862, *#108a*], Area Administrator Friesen presented the case of our secession from the decadent Mennonite churches in such a way that there were only two alternatives. Either we would have to be stricken from the colonial register (and thereby lose our civil rights and be exiled from the colonies) or we would be recognized as an independent church. After their return to the churches, the elders most assiduously incited their members against us [with reservation cf. #108c above], so that we would be stricken from the colonial register. The churches, however, with the exception of a few members, feared God and disregarded the goading of the elders. God thereby brought their premeditated plan to nought, so that now, according to the declaration of Area Administrator Friesen, we should be an independent church. The Area Administrative Office, nevertheless, publicizes us in the colonies as a newly founded sect, thereby clearly showing that the Area Administrative Office does not keep its promises, and is determined to harm us. This is in complete disagreement with the promise of the Area Administrative Office to J. Claassen on November 30 of this year, to assist us, etc. Furthermore, there is proof that even the elders, when they wanted to confirm our exclusion from the colonist status, were not united—for two elders did not give their consent from the very beginning—one of them [Friesen of the *Kleine Gemeinde*] declaring it orally, and the Ohrloff-Halbstadt elder writing it in a declaration of November 12, 1862. k) From all this one can see the boundless, unrestrained and lawless rule of the Area Administrative Office against us. This is not the will of our dear Tsar, but rather, that righteousness and justice be done. Therefore the Area Administrative Office does not have the right to take revenge on us, but to maintain and not suppress the rights which individuals have been accorded by that government. 1) Our entire present situation has been presented simultaneously to the

Supervisory Commission for foreign settlers and the highest Ministry of Crown Lands. m) Nevertheless, we again request the Molotschna Mennonite Area Administrative Office to petition the Supervisory Commission and seek permission for us: 1) to settle at the stated place at the Kuban; 2) that our settlement there be founded on the same basis that exists in the New-Russian provinces; namely that we may enjoy the privileges granted to our fathers and us by the gracious monarch of Russia." [Thus far the presentation to the Area Administrative Office. The following is addressed directly to the Ministry.] . . . n) "And 4. We fear that the Area Administrative Office may seek to misrepresent the fact before the higher authorities that several brethren took their cattle to the Kuban in the fall of 1863, as though we were beginning to resettle without waiting for permission from the exalted Ministry. This was not the case, however, and was only a move to save the cattle after . . . two successive crop failures here. December 30, 1863. Liebenau Colony." The copy of the petition before us bears 58 original signatures: "Ministers of the church Heinrich Huebert, Jakob Reimer, Bernhard Penner, Jakob Becker, Heinrich Neufeld, David Duerksen, Friedrich Strauss, Franz Klaassen, Isaak Koop, Abraham Wiens, Isaak Koop (son of the above), Peter Stobbe, Heinrich Flaming, Wilhelm Loewen, Andreas Voth, Dietrich Claassen, Jakob Kroeker, Johann Friesen, Gerhard Friesen, Franz Friesen, Hermann Peters,[187] Jakob Martens, Heinrich Boldt, Abraham Eidzen, Daniel Eidzen, Johann Martins, Cornelius Penner, Heinrich Penner, Abraham Penner, Franz Wall, Abraham Deleske,[188] Jakob Deleske, Jakob Devehr, Cornelius Wiens, Abraham Wiens, Bernhard Janzen, Abraham Neufeld, Heinrich Friesen, Wilhelm Giesbrecht, Cornelius Claassen, Peter Siemens, David Claassen, Cornelius Pauls, Franz Martens, Johann Claassen, Cornelius Reimer, Abraham Dyck, Johann Claassen, Benjamin Becker, Klaas Huebert, Jakob Giesbrecht, Peter Nickel, Dietrich Claassen, Johann Claassen, Peter Buhler, Cornelius Knelsen, Peter Dueck, Abraham Huebert" [for the result, cf. 4.b. below].

§176 4. The Kuban Settlement receives legal ratification.

a) Jakob Reimer—diary 1884: ". . . had to go to the village offices on January 10 to find out where our families had been in the 10th census" [in order to compile a list of families for resettlement to the Kuban].

b) (Translation from the Russian.) "Ministry of Crown Lands, Department 2, Division 4. Desk 1. March 4, 1864. No. 5534. From the first department of Crown Lands, To the Mennonites of the Taurida Province, Berdiansk District, Molotschna Mennonite territory, Heinrich Huebert and company. In answer to your December 30, 1863, petition

and *Promemoria* to the Minister of Crown Lands requesting expedition of permission to resettle in a Caucasus state, you are herewith notified that permission for the desired resettlement is granted by the Honorable Minister, and he has duly informed His Highness the governor of the Caucasus states. On January 24 of this year, in Memo No. 1631, the Supervisory Commission for foreign settlers was asked to ascertain the following with precision and accuracy: a) which 100 Mennonite families the Caucasus province had granted resettlement permission through the Caucasus governorship; and b) will the respective village [colony] churches not devise hindrances which will prevent said families from leaving their assembly? c) to permit them to elect representatives from their midst to inspect the land granted for their resettlement to the Kuban, and to fulfill the preparatory work for resettlement, and supply them with visas for the trip there. After the accomplished agreement of the settlers with the Caucasus board, the arrangements for the actual resettlement will be left to their judgment, while the Supervisory Commission will correspond with the Caucasus province about the final count of the Mennonites from the Taurida and Ekaterinoslav states who actually resettled there. In addition to the above, the first department states that the determination of the rights which the resettlers are to enjoy at their new place of residence, will be dependent on the Caucasus board in whose administrative area they settle. For the director, N.N. [illegible]. Division Chairman, Heinrichsson."

c) The actual dismissal from the colonial association of villages seems to have been accomplished without difficulty. Copies of statements by the villages dismissing the members are extant, as for example from the village of Sparrau, in whose "revised list" ["Dessiataia Revisia"] the Claassen family appears.

d) Finally the authority to move! a) The letter of Johann Claasen, April 19, 1866: ". . . On Saturday May 9, 1864, the brethren were assembled together in Halbstadt in order to confer the authority upon me and choose a man to care for orphans [in accordance with Mennonite custom to defend the interests of widows and orphans and be in charge of guardianships and inheritances]. Br. Peters [Abraham Peters of Ladekopp] and I were elected deputies, if I had anything to write from Tiflis. . . . On May 14 I was in court in Berdiansk with a few of the brethren, in order to have my authority confirmed. The court demanded that those persons be present who had signed my authority in Halbstadt . . . . The brethren came and my authority was confirmed . . . ." b) The Molotschna document of authorization is not in our possession, but we do possess one identical to the original of the brethren from the Chortitza District, in Russian and German, on a stamped sheet of paper. The German reads: "The honorable Johann Claassen. After the Ministry

of Crown Lands had, as a consequence of your mediation,[189] ordered that we, together with our colleagues and up to 100 families, be allowed to resettle in the Kuban, it informed the Mennonite Heinrich Huebert that the determination of the rights we were to enjoy in the new settlement, were dependent upon the Caucasus authorities. Since we wish to enjoy the same rights which all Mennonites possess in Southern Russia, we beg you to travel to the Kuban region, there to persuade the local authorities to grant us the above-mentioned privileges in the new settlement in that region, and to acquire from them a proper document in this regard, and to send the same to us. Therefore we concede you the right, instead of submitting our petition, to listen to the decisions reached as a consequence of the above and to express your own pleasure or displeasure with regard to them. We will trust you in this, and what you will do in this matter will remain uncontested by us. Mennonites of the colony of the Chortitza District, Province and District of Ekaterinoslav, colony of Rosental: Heinrich Epp, son of Cornelius, colony of Lower Chortitza; Benjamin Nickel, son of Benjamin, colony of Kronsweide; Johann Froes, son of Cornelius; Peter Unrau, son of Wilhelm; Jacob[190] Neufeld, son of Johann; Heindrich[191] Krause, son of Peter, colony of Neuendorf; Peter Berg, son of Jakob, colony of Schoenhorst; Peter Neufeld, son of Peter, colony of Einlage; Abraham Unger, son of Heinrich; Jakob Koslowsky, son of David, colony of Chortitza;[192] Johann Isaak, son of Jakob; Peter Friesen, son of Isaak; Franz Wieler, son of Johann;[193] Kornelius Hiebert, son of Johann; Jakob Wieler, son of Johann,[193] colony of Schoewiese; Diedrich Goerzen, son of Diedrich. . . ." [There follow the formalities of confirmation by the district court in Alexandrovsk with signature and seal of May 4, 1864, and the explanation that this authority belonged "to the Mennonites of the Liebenau Colony, district of Molotschna, Province of Taurida, Johann Claassen."]

§177 5. Actual Settlement on the Kuban.

a) Johann Claassen, letter of April 19, 1866: ". . . on May 27, 1864, Wednesday afternoon, I left for Stavropol with Br. Wieler [Gerhard] and Bernhard Janzen and my son Jakob. My wife and children accompanied me to Pastva [last Mennonite colony in the Molotschna, in the eastern section]. Brother and Sister Harms and the Schinkovskys . . . had left five days earlier . . . . On the afternoon of June 10 we arrived at the Kuban, at the place where the new settlement was to be established. We met Brother and Sister H. Nickel and their children, Abram Dyck, Peter and Gerhard Buller, at the potato field. Here we greeted each other, and were very happy to see one another again. For supper we were the guests of the Nickels . . . ." b) Jakob Reimer, diary: ". . . on June 3, 1864, we

left for the Kuban with three wagons . . . . We arrived on the 20th . . . . It was quite an adventure . . . . Most of our possessions were now carried into the *semlianka* [called 'simlin' in Mennonite usage—an earth hut]. On Sunday we rested and studied God's Word . . . . On the 23rd we worked in the hay . . . . On Sunday, June 28, according to what I was told, the first regular church service was held. In the afternoon the brethren met for consultation . . . ." Reimer, in a letter of July 5, 1864, to Cornelius Reimer, expresses himself ill-humoredly about conditions in the settlement. As a consequence, he was unable to endure conditions there much longer. On September 16, 1864, he wrote in his diary: ". . . on September 16 we already left the Kuban and began our trip home . . . . I did not get along too well with Claassen, for he was too domineering . . . . On October 7 we arrived back home . . . ." Reimer, in a letter to Cornelius Reimer: "Gnadenfeld, November 20, 1864 . . . . If I had not said 'A' I would not say 'B', for some of God's children are still here and others will continue to come . . . ." He never returned to the Kuban; instead, together with some Old Colony brethren, he first rented, then bought, land in the Ekaterinoslav region. He founded Blumenau in the Alexandrov area, then, with his sons and other brethren, Wiesenfeld in the Pavlograd area of the Ekaterinoslav administrative region. He remained here until his death (1891) and served as leader among the local Mennonite Brethren, but he travelled little.

c) Difficult times in the settlement. Many of the other registered settlers, especially from the Old Colony, followed Reimer's example and also returned. This gave rise to a great deal of irritation and painful unpleasantness with the Caucasus officials who were annoyed by these events, and would not admit any new settlers beyond the 100 originally listed. Thus the settlement did not comprise 100 but only 67 full farms, as well as a number of small farms of ten dessiatines. The settlement consisted of the villages of Wohldemfuerst and Alexanderfeld, which in the 1890s were renamed Velikokniashesk and Alexandrodar. Together they constituted the Volost Velikokniashesk.

d) Amid all these awkward situations, vexations, and hardships, Claassen would not be deterred. "There are new trials," he wrote to his wife in Liebenau on July 16, 1864, "which we must endure here. The excessive amount of work required, and the scarcity on all sides make it necessary for one to be careful that he does not become unloving or concerned only about himself . . . . The Word of God says those who want to become rich fall into temptation and traps, etc. . . . I am not surprised that things are going as they are . . . things will get even worse, but then they will improve. The golden mountains must first turn to copper, and one must learn to be content with that, and then better

times will come . . . ." On August 16: ". . . It seems to me that the [spiritual] life is on a higher level in the Molotschna than here at the Kuban, for here everyone is in need, and thus stinginess is really put to the test. . . . The rest for the saints—God be thanked a thousand times!—is not here on the Kuban [as many had often hoped, but not Claassen], but in the city with golden streets . . . . Here on the Kuban I have experienced only little joy. 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us . . .' " (Hebrews 12). On December 15: ". . . I and Jakob have been rather ragged throughout the summer; we really very much need to have 'mother' with us again. Well, the loving Savior knows what is best for our souls . . . . Here at the Kuban many brothers and sisters have been sick . . . . Almost all, with few exceptions . . . . The brothers and sisters from the Old Colony have been much affected. But it is good to endure all things in patience. At the right time things will change . . . ."

e) In the oft-quoted letter of April 19, 1866, from Tiflis to the Kuban Church, Claassen reports on many difficult events: ". . . Brothers and sisters, you will know very well how things went during the time when I was at the Kuban. If matters concerning the authorities arose, you knew very well where to find me; also when land had to be measured; and when help was needed [with money, etc] I was also expected to provide a solution. I believe, brothers and sisters, that I have served you to the best of my knowledge, and have worked for your best as I understood it. I do not mean to imply that I have not also made mistakes, for I am human and beset by weakness. Dear brothers and sisters, you know how in that time we were oppressed by physical needs; we had not taken enough money from home to travel to Tiflis, and since I could not travel anyway, the money was used to buy bread . . . . The brothers and sisters in the Molotschna were unhappy because I was not travelling; you have letters to demonstrate that . . . . The brothers and sisters from the Old Colony would have approved the removal of my authority, etc. . . ."

§178 6. Document for Confirmation of the Mennonite Religious Rights of the Kuban Settlers.

On November 19, 1865, Claassen arrived in Tiflis for the second time and had to remain there until finally (!) on May 30, 1866, he received the longed-for document in accordance with the instructions of His Highness the Grand Prince, the Governor and Commander-in-Chief, whose deputy delivered the document. Translation from the Russian.

Certificate

"In accordance with the decision of the assistant to the

Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Caucasus, the civil authorities of the mountains [*Gorskoie Uprvleniie*] affirm that the Mennonites of the administrative regions of Taurida and Ekaterinoslav, who have received permission from both local and Caucasus authorities to settle on the left bank of the Kuban opposite Staniza Nevinomysk, shall retain, in the exercise of their religion, all those rights which the authorities have granted them in their current places of residence. The authenticity of this is certified by signature and the affixing of the crown seal. No. 2718. May 30, 1866, Tiflis. In the absence of the Head of the Caucasus Mountain Authority [Signature] Seal-Division Head [Signature]."

7. How heavy the weight of all these struggles, this sitting and waiting, running and asking, especially the separation from family and home, often was for Claassen is shown by this passage, together with many others, from a letter from Tiflis to his wife on April 19, 1866. "Often I wonder why this lot has fallen to me. Why does the Lord not distribute the load? Why must I be the one who is always far away from his family? I also tell my Lord about this situation, and ask Him to remember that I am dust and ashes. I tell my Lord that I am human, that I have a heart filled with longing! You have given me a wife, and I may not embrace her. You have given me children, and I may not instruct them. My infant child I do not even know. My wife has a husband, but she must bear the burdens alone; the children have a father, but the little ones do not know him . . . ." §179

8. Short Report of a Part of the Molotschna and Einlage Mennonite Brethren Church now Settled on the Kuban. §180

This is given by the aged, venerable brother, Elder Daniel Fast, who retired about 1902, under the date of April 29, 1902. a) "After Br. Johann Claassen had received permission from the St. Petersburg government to acquire land for settlement on the Kuban River, he and Br. Heinrich Nickel went there in the fall of 1863 as the first pioneers. In October they were followed by the brethren Abraham Peters [Ladekopp, senior deacon], Simon Harms, Peter Martens and Schoenkovsky [Claassen writes 'Schinkovsky'], that is, four brethren without families and with 36 cows. In November of that year Br. Claassen returned to the Molotschna, but the four brethren stayed for the winter, prepared their lands in 1864, and then returned to their families in the Molotschna. Here they disposed of their farms, and took their families to their new home on the Kuban. Br. Claassen and son [Jakob] also joined the group. In the fall Cornelius Reimer and others also went. In 1865 the brethren [Cornelius] Reimer and [Johann] Claassen each received another ten dessiatines land for a garden along the stream Kusma, also called

Ovetschka. Here both of them, after they had gone back for their families, settled temporarily. b) In 1866 Br. Claassen went to Tiflis and received from the government [written] assurance that the Mennonite rights of the Molotschna Mennonites also extended to the Kuban settlers. In this year the other brethren from the administrative areas Taurida and Ekaterinoslav also came here, 67 of 100 families, since the difficulties of moving here frightened off 33 families. Thus there remained land for only 67 families (at 65 dessiatines), settled on the left bank of the Kuban River in the two colonies called Wohldemfuerst and Alexanderfeld. They are close to each other and are today called Velikokniashesk and Alexandrodar. . . ." (Cf. also *#185ff.*)

C. *Documents Primarily Concerning the Spiritual "Despotism" and the Excesses of the "Exuberant Ones"*

(Supplement to Chapter XVIII)

§181 1. a) After the victory over Antinomianism in 1862 the excessive exuberance had also receded (cf. above "Minutes of the Meeting of the Ohrloff Ministers"). However, when a number of the older and more influential brethren were removed from the church in the Molotschna because of the settlement on the Kuban, and Brother Huebert, in view of his poor health and severe despondency, as well as the death of his first wife, proved himself weaker than ever and remained without influence, while Mr. Jakob Reimer's influence had been weakened by his hesitation in the Kuban settlement, leadership fell into the hands of two young, spiritually shallow but strongly self-confident brethren: Br. Benjamin Becker, who had already been commissioned as an itinerant minister in 1861 (he was often also boldly called "Apostle!"), and Br. Bernhard Penner, who had been appointed to assist Br. Huebert. With incredible energy, these now again began to cultivate the "pure joy," and thus established an arrogant despotism over those who did not agree with them.

b) It must also be admitted that Claassen did not act with sufficient clear-sightedness, clarity and energy in this matter. This seems almost incomprehensible in view of the clear and balanced vision he demonstrated in other spiritual and civil matters. We must let the old records, of both sides, tell the story.

§182 2. Among the opponents, Jakob Reimer is the most insightful and significant, and in this, as well as earlier periods, he has provided rich and photographically accurate material. He writes in his diary: "On January 9, 1864, my brother-in-law Claassen and Diedrich Claassen came

to me [in Gnadenfeld]. The former quarrelled with me because I was opposed to the playing of dance and march music [in the church services!] which I, poor soul, believe they play for their own entertainment and then they dance and jump. I am not opposed to being joyful nor to what Paul says, 'Rejoice in the Lord.' However, I am opposed to that which is not appropriate for a true Christian, or does not express love. But I am trying to remain quiet, since nothing can be changed. The Lord will expose and judge these matters . . . . On the 30th of November [1864, after his return from the Kuban] . . . we were at Penners [in Gnadenfeld], where the brethren—especially Benjamin and Isaak Koop, Elizabethtal, assisted as much as possible by Bernhard—berated me because I did not join them in their exuberance; instead, when they had music and dance, I would leave . . . . On December 6, 1864, I was in Liebenau, where the brothers and sisters were meeting, but because of the difficult roads, only a few had come. Toward evening they very nearly expressed their joy with hands and feet, mouth and lips, but my presence bothered them. After the others had left, we confidentially discussed the sad condition of the church, and the five of us [Mrs. Claassen, Mrs. Gertrude Reimer, Brother and Sister Franz and Reimer] seemed to be of one opinion. From here I went . . . to Christian Schmidt [at that time living in the Russian village of Tokmak]. They are also opposed to the expressions of unrestrained joy . . . . The other day we were at Jakob Jantz in Fuerstenau for the noon meal [he is now an elder in Friedensfeld; at that time he had been a member of the M.B. Church for a quarter of a year], then for night we went to Liebenau, where, with Br. Huebert, we discussed freely how we felt about our experiences with the brethren, and how the outer demonstration of joy might be directed. We jointly presented our concerns to our Lord Jesus, and asked Him to pour out His good Holy Spirit and open the eyes of the brethren. Then in the forenoon I further discussed these matters with Br. Huebert; we were of one opinion. When I returned home on Monday evening, Benjamin, like a commanding officer, also Koop, Bernhard Penner (now badly confused,[194] even if in a different way],[195] Deleske, and the dear Franz Klassen, who was there as witness, two single sisters, and the old Sister Penner [Bernhard's mother] met at our place. After an unenthusiastic greeting, the inflated 'apostle' [II Cor. 11:5, also 12:11] announced that they had come to excommunicate me. To my dear wife he had said 'to judge,' at which she was more than a little alarmed. That this was being planned, and that they were holding such ideas, had already been told me by some trusted brothers and sisters. For two hours we presented evidence as to who was right, the four of them against me (the sisters only expressed agreement). The matter of principal concern was only the dancing and the playing of the dances. I then asked them not to excommunicate me, and said I would remain

quiet and prayerfully examine the issue further before the Lord, and would leave the leading of church meetings to them [Reimer was Huebert's first assistant]. That seemed to satisfy them somewhat, but after a short pause, Benjamin arose, took the floor, and said, 'No, that is not possible, his silence also preaches!' 'Yes,' said Koop, 'he must prove it by his actions and join us in our activities!!' I was presented as one who had a false teaching and was asked to leave the room [it was the entry hall in Reimer's house and dwelling!]. Again I asked them not to excommunicate me, for they did not constitute the church. Benjamin responded that they were quite capable of this; and so I went into the small room and read the letters which had been received from the brothers and sisters in the Crimea [August Strauss, Andreas Voth and others moved to the Crimea and settled on rented land there, rather than going to the Kuban, since they were not in sympathy with the methods used by the church]. One of the brothers cited Isaiah 43, the first two verses, at the beginning of his letter. Now they [Benjamin and the others] instructed my wife and daughter Maria on how they should relate to me. When they had pronounced the ban on me, and before they left, they called me inside and announced it to me, with the words, 'You are excommunicated, may this bring you to humility! Goodbye.' That was a very difficult evening, more for the members of my household than for myself, for I felt no pangs of conscience over this. On December 12, Benjamin, Koop and Bernhard came in and asked my wife and Maria to come to Penners, where they again told them what a dangerous person I was. They were urged to save their souls and keep their distance from me, especially in prayer. O Lord Jesus, how difficult for me to accept! But You will be at my side and again give me brothers and sisters. On Sunday, December 13, Bernhard demanded the church record book or register of me; I gladly gave it. On December 17 my wife and Unruh's Caroline were also put out, because they had said they did not believe that I was a dangerous person, they could not see this. Benjamin and Wieler [Gerhard] told them they should believe their words, for Reimer was opposed to the teaching of the joy of salvation! On December 24 two brethren, Unruh and Penner, came and asked my wife and Maria, how they were getting along. When my wife told them, she was reprimanded for wanting to teach, rather than receive instruction. December 25. The blessed Christmas day might well have been made dreary for me, but far from it! For the dear Lord did good things to me in body and soul. Especially sweet in the morning hour were the voices of the three [youngest] children as they sang to us the comforting songs concerning Christ's becoming man. Thus far the inflated apostles had not torn the heart of the daughter [Maria] from her parents, for her childlike love conquered doubts as to whether she should sing along [since by this she would be entering into fellowship with the excommunicated parents].

Soon, out of gratitude to her parents, and with tears in her eyes, she joined in the singing of her brothers and sisters. After this, out of love to her as my daughter and sister in the Lord, I embraced and kissed her, and she me. When finally after morning prayer, one by one they came before us with their child-like wishes, and asked the blessing of the baby Jesus, she [daughter Maria] could stand it no longer, and came of her own volition—for she had gone to the little room while we were in prayer, for fear that she would be placed under the ban—warmly and tearfully hugged and kissed us, and we were again united, I believe, forever. O, what can be done by distorted opinions!! On December 26, three brethren from Kakbas came here and asked why we had been put out of the church. They were surprised at the arbitrariness of the others. Peter Dycks came for lunch and told us how G. Wieler was spreading havoc in the Old Colony. He had excommunicated Abram Unger, Heinrich Epp and Johann Koslowsky, and twenty others had left with them. We also drove to Klaas Schmidts once [now 'Friend of Jerusalem'] but the word given us from the Word of God did not appeal to us. On December 31 our daughter Maria was excommunicated by Bernhard with the words, 'In the name of Jesus I excommunicate you! . . ."

3. We shall now allow the other side, represented by Benjamin Becker, to express itself. §183

a) Becker writes: "To all brothers and sisters on the Kuban. Elizabethtal, December 14, 1864. This letter has been read to the whole church, and the church has said 'Amen' to this. May the grace of God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, dear brothers and sisters on the Kuban! In the name of Jesus and of the church in this area I am writing to tell you about conditions here, and to tell you about the attitude of the brothers and sisters here and in the Old Colony to you, brothers and sisters on the Kuban. I wrote to you, dear brothers and sisters, that the brothers and sisters here are greatly displeased with you there on the Kuban. First of all we have heard how P. and M. and H.N.[196] have walked unworthy of the Lord during the past winter. Also, during the past summer we have received written and oral reports of the dissension among the brothers and sisters on the Kuban. The one has complained and lamented about the other, so that we here and especially the brothers and sisters of the Old Colony have lost almost all our courage to move to the Kuban, since you already have so much quarreling and dissension that God will have to come with his correction rod, and discipline you who are living there. [Compare this tone to the humble and clear judgment, both of himself and his brothers and sisters, expressed by Claassen, above, and also further below! These great judges, Br. B. Becker and those of like mind, have also been

judged. They have generally not given evidence of great sanctification.] Dear brothers and sisters, Br. B. writes us, he believes that the climate is not alone to blame for the illness which you have to endure there; instead, he believes that those who do not walk uprightly before the Lord will be judged by God according to I Cor. 11. Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, we also partly believe this, as Br. B. writes. But I want to write to you what has become clear to us brothers and sisters, expecially to those brethren who were already in the church when the N. case arose [reference is made to the difficult case of the sin of a brother during the revelations of the 'freedom' teaching, see *#118*]. God permitted this to happen, so that He might test our faith. Deuteronomy 13 says, 'The Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.' So also we believe that God at that time thus permitted the devil to test the congregation of God (the well-known instances of falling into sin). Now God wanted to see if we would give Him whole-hearted obedience, and let nothing of the ban cling to our hands. However! what has happened in our church during the past three years; when the men appeared and spoke a distorted doctrine, saying that some should be put out of the church, such as Hoppe and Strauss at first; secondly Abraham Cornelsen, Heinrich and Wilhelm Bartel [the latter two were, together with Benjamin and J. Becker, for a long time the vigorous opponents of the first three; whose only guilt was that they had condemned the childish and false spiritual joy and freedom; see above, Bartel's letter to Claassen, *#115,h*], who were to be excommunicated, so that no one might have fellowship with them, nor eat or drink with them, nor greet or kiss them nor receive them into one's home, lest their teaching be accepted and someone be led astray thereby. Dear brothers and sisters, if we today appear before the Lord and allow His Word to judge us, then our heavenly Father cannot look down with favor upon us, for we have all soiled our hands with the ban, some more, some less. First of all, we believe that God cannot be pleased with all those brothers and sisters, who have been an offence to our fellowship, and have not yet humbled themselves in this matter. I want to remind all of you, who are still at the Kuban, what happened two years ago when, before Claassen had returned from St. Petersburg, at the congregational meeting at Klassen's in Lichtfelde, where the members—Bartel and the Kakbass brethren—agreed that Cornelsen, Regehr, Wall, Penner and all those who had received Sister N,[197] should be regarded as banned, they were not to be greeted, nor was anyone to have fellowship with them. But how was this ban observed by some? I say no. Abraham Wiens and Cornelius Wiens soon gave offence in this matter to the church, as did Reimer and some others from Gnadenfeld who listened to the brethren from Kakbass, who only wanted to cause disorder and division among us—something in

which they were largely successful. In addition, after Claassen had returned from St. Petersburg, he tried to restore unity among us and the Kakbass brethren, which was contrary to the Word of God, and persuaded me and Huebert, Harms and many other brethren, not to shun them, as the Scriptures say and as had been decided in Lichtfelde. But Claassen presented the situation in such a way that they should also be regarded as children of God. Jakob Reimer also declared that, even though they had not humbled themselves, he could go to communion with the Kakbass brethren, provided Sister —— were not there. They then acted in accordance with their beliefs, except that they did not celebrate communion. Almost always, however, when they met these seducers, they would greet them. This was done by the brethren [Johann] Claassen, Jakob Reimer, Cornelius Reimer, Johann Strauss, when they returned home from the Kuban [Fall, 1862], but Br. [Gerhard] Wieler [who now as well as later had B. Becker under his influence] did not do this, and was accordingly regarded as one who knew nothing of freedom of conscience, but instead wanted to bind the conscience. But these brethren did not consider such things, nor that they were causing offence and vexation for many. When, however, many brothers and sisters were dissatisfied, the earlier-mentioned brethren modified their position to the extent that they said, 'For the sake of you who are weak, and to avoid offence, we will permit this.' But for the sake of their conscience, they could also greet various people with the kiss. And so they presented a number of brothers and sisters as being weak, while actually those regarded as weak were right, even though they had remained silent, since they did not wish to quarrel with those who thought they were strong. But this also is not right, for it is written, 'Speak the truth, everyone with his neighbor.' But how have things gone until this time? If anyone wished to censure an error, so that the offender might be punished, he was asked if he was really acting in love, since one might well be too harsh. There is clear evidence that up to the present day, stern [oh!] enough measures have never been taken against the deceivers [?]; Brother Martens himself now admits this. If earlier action had been taken against him, he would have repented sooner for his works. But now, dear brothers and sisters, in our fellowship things are not going to be done as they were in the past, when everyone did and taught that which seemed good to him. And they walked according to the evil desires of their hearts. . . . And also Br. Becker [Jacob][198] and Abram Regehr, Cornelius Reimer, Sokolosky, Jakob Reimer had fellowship with Isaak Matthies before they moved away from here. It is written, II John: He who errs and does not remain with the doctrine has no God. And he who does not bring the teaching of God, of him it says: Do not receive him and do not greet him, for he who greets him becomes a partaker of his evil works. But these brothers and sisters had fellowship

with Matthies in buying and selling [!!]. Reimer of Liebenau said he did not agree with what the brethren in Landeskrone decided at their church meeting. For Isaak Matthies has fallen away from God, since he did not remain in the teaching of Christ, but erred and can have no God, but is severed from God; and with such a person, Paul says, we are not even supposed to eat. Despite all this which clearly shows that Isaak Matthies has fallen away from God, Jakob Reimer and Peter Dyck of Wernersdorf still teach that Isaak Matthies is not a person who has violated the teaching of Christ and is separated from God. Both of these brethren have been admonished several times, but they refused to be corrected; instead they argued against this. No doubt several brethren will know that Reimer was always opposed to jubilation, jumping and dancing; now he has begun to teach that those brethren were sinning who, to the glory of God, were, like David, praising God with music . . . . Our fellowship also is not satisfied with Brother and Sister Giesbrecht either, for Sister Giesbrecht has complained of her poverty to her worldly relatives, and writes that only now is she finding out how dear and valuable her family members are. Similar things are being done by several brothers and sisters among you . . . . If one wishes to find out something about them, one has to go to the world and ask, they know almost everything about what is happening at the Kuban. Often we have to hold our mouth shut when they tell us about the brothers and sisters at the Kuban, how in all your poverty you are still covetous, each for his own situation. If you are not covetous of earthly possessions, then you are covetous of honor among yourselves. It is clear that where there is not love, there is covetousness, for covetousness is the root of all evil . . . . Dear brothers, to all of you who still love the truth, I write, let your hearts be purified through faith unto good works. For we are writing to you, after we have confessed before the Lord, that we wish to be purified of all those brothers and sisters who walk unworthily, so that we may be a new clay. b) We are also writing to you that we no longer recognize Abram Peters [of Ladekopp] as deacon or as one who cares for the poor. A servant is to hold the mystery of the faith in a clean conscience. Peters has been tested, but has not maintained the mystery of the faith. This became apparent in Liebenau in Reimer's market when one evening, in the presence of Reimer, Claassen, Benjamin Becker, he banged his fist on the table and said that Wieler [Gerhard] would not go to Tiflis with Claassen. He said similar things to Br. Wieler, so that Br. Wieler cannot be satisfied with Peters, unless he humbles himself in this matter. In addition, J.B. writes to his wife from M., stating that he is acting like a person of the world. This also cannot be right. Dear brothers and sisters, be careful and produce true fruits of repentance, so that the Word of God may not judge you and say to you, Why should I punish you longer, since you are only going further astray. Dear brothers

and sisters, we implore you each to judge yourself. Be converted from your sins, so that the heavenly Father will not need to judge you. Do not say, 'From what shall we be converted?' You have soiled your hands enough, even before you moved away from here. You should also know this: we do not intend to let regulations be prescribed for us by people such as Abram Wiens and Jakob Giesbrecht who always taught that it was wrong and unspiritual . . . to greet brothers and sisters with a kiss, even though they greeted their nieces with a kiss. And especially Giesbrecht—how often have I admonished him—but he was always justifying himself, so that one had to shut his mouth, for he often taught things which were not good. Dear brothers and sisters, it is written, I Cor. 1, Let there be no divisions among you, but be united in the same mind and in the same judgment. And in another place it is written, Be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. c) In addition, I am writing to state that on December 18 and 19, the church was assembled [in Gnadenheim], and from the Old Colony there were present the brethren Wieler [Gerhard], Peter Neufeld, Benjamin Nickel. Br. Wieler reported from the Kuban; the brethren Koop, Penner and Janzen were also there and corroborated his report. If those brethren, who have not walked in the truth, are not going to repent, we shall not wish to have any fellowship with you, before you remove the evil from among you. But we are especially displeased with the above-mentioned members. On the other hand, N.N. and his wife have been excommunicated from the church because they permitted the tavern-keeper to come into their house with liquor [during the public auction of their possessions]. N. also has been put out of the church because of her pride, since she would not receive instruction. Deuteronomy 17 and other passages talk about this. These are to be avoided until they have humbled themselves before us[199] and God. The congregation is of a similar mind concerning the above-mentioned brethren, for they had fellowship with Isaak Matthies as well as with those of Kakbas while enroute to the Kuban, where, without examination, they were received into the congregation, which is not regarded as valid on the part of Becker and Abram Regehr, because before they left here, they did not walk in the light, otherwise they would not have had fellowship with Isaak Matthies.[200] We write this to you as a word of the Lord: Repent and believe, so that you may live! The congregation is of one mind here that all those who preach regulations which do not agree with the Word of God, shall be put out without delay. In addition, Christian Schmidt has been excommunicated, because he taught that P. should not be baptized [for the second time in the M.B. Church, since he had not been honest the first time]. He refused to humble himself concerning his false teaching. d) In the Old Colony, as many as thirty people have been excommunicated, because they have

become disobedient again; among these Berg and Koslowsky are the initiators. Dear brethren, fear God and remove the evil from you, so that you may be healed of your wickedness. The Lord has given our congregation great joy, so that during the whole night, as the congregation met, there was no silence from the praise and thanksgiving, there was rejoicing and jubilation [those who did not join in the rejoicing and jubilation found themselves in the same situation as Jakob Reimer!], for the enemy of God had not been able to tear us apart, as he had planned to do. [And what about the many who were excommunicated, solely because of differences of understanding?] For a long time now, we have not experienced such joy, for since that time the congregation has still lacked a unity of the spirit. Now, however, everyone who had defiled himself confessed his sins and all became united in the spirit. e) Brother Huebert [201] also has long ceased walking in faith. He was admonished before the whole congregation and was warned that, if he did not deeply repent from where he had fallen, he could not remain a minister. But the other day, during the meeting of the congregation, he deeply humbled himself, also toward Wieler, because he had not loved him. In his prayer before all of us, he tearfully confessed that he had stood on the edge of hell. But God, who is rich in mercy, had once more rescued him, and for this he was thankful to God. The entire congregation began to weep for joy, so that Brother Huebert was enlivened again to struggle for the faith of the Gospel once for all delivered to the saints, Jude 1. Now, dear brothers and sisters, receive the word of exhortation, which we have written to you, for your good, so that we may again rejoice because of you, and you with us, until we all arrive at one faith and understanding of the Son of God, and become a perfect man. f) I am also writing you that Bernhard Penner has been dedicated by the whole congregation for the ministry of the Word and for teaching. Jakob Franz [Liebenau] has been chosen as a minister, and Fast from Schoenau has been elected to the ministry also. . . . Amen. Your Brother Benjamin Becker." [202] [More letters of this tone from Br. B. are available. This is sufficient for us.]

§184 4. Growth of the Church in a Dismal Period (Supplement to #120). In this confused and sad time it pleased God nonetheless to send to the church new and entirely differently disposed elements from the circle of believers and seekers in the Ohrloff Church (from which Elder Huebert had come). These were the fruit of the activities of Tobias Voth and Bernhard Fast, their associates and followers of similar persuasion. One can only ascribe to the gracious and wise providence of God the fact that people now joined the M.B. Church, not looking on the spectacles and emotionalism as described in the above-mentioned places, nor on the chaos of that time, but rather on the basic principles and goals. In

summer, 1864, just before the wildest outbursts of emotionalism and arbitrariness, five who later became elders, joined (they were co-elders and stewards)—Daniel Fast, school teacher in Blumenort, who naturally immediately lost his position—now, after many years of service, since 1892 retired elder at the Kuban; his nephew (son of his sister), Johann J. Fast, later widely known as an itinerant minister, representative of elders and co-elder (a "mother" to the church in soul care); he passed away in Rueckenau in 1892; Jacob Jantz, elder of the M.B. Church in Friedensfeld (Miropol); Abraham Schellenberg of Tiege, at that time a young man, later elder of the M.B. Church in the Molotschna and since 1878 in North America; Philipp Isaak of Blumenort, who died in Tiege, Molotschna, 1878, the constant "committee member," the great administrator, treasurer and steward in the Molotschna M.B. Church and in the M.B. Conference, father[203] of the meetinghouse complex in Rueckenau, a true "ruler" of God's grace, who faithfully supported Br. Huebert's tired hands after the passing of the time of storm and stress, especially the "wild year" (fall 1864 until spring 1865), and other intelligent and moderate personalities and families. In these five God had chosen His five bishops, shepherds, and rulers, who became the power that was able to put an end to the excesses of the overly exuberant elements in that they, united with Christian Schmidt and others of like mind, gave strength to Claassen (summer 1865), and helped Huebert: D.F., J.F., J. Jantz and A. Schellenberg were all, for longer or shorter periods, Huebert's helpers, either simultaneously or consecutively. Philipp J. was always a helper and advisor to all, even though he never preached. The "strong" would soon find their opponents in them (pg. 8).

5. The church in the Kuban, so castigated by B. Becker, gives the following evidences of economic and spiritual life: a) Johann Claassen writes to his wife: "December 1, 1864. When Cornelius Reimer came here, I had that day finished one room, so that we wanted to move in, but there were still no windows or doors; nevertheless, we were glad to have a place where we could eat decently. As yet there were no rafters on my dwelling, and there still are none, but we have put on a thatched roof instead of rafters. December 5 . . . . I finished the oven . . . . I and Jakob are wearing rather tattered clothes. I wear three pairs of cotton or wool trousers over each other [and that was the richest and most formal one among them, the elegant deputy, who, in St. Petersburg! in tuxedo, gloves and top hat visited ministers, senators and generals! How must the others have fared!] . . . Sunday, December 6, in the evening, we had foot-washing according to the command of the Lord. [Apparently these poor people, because of all their worries and spiritual weaknesses, did not feel worthy to have the Lord's Supper!] On Monday we had a love feast together (in my dwelling). We brought our food together: one gave bread, the other butter, another tea, a fourth sugar, and so on. Some brought dry wood (it is very scarce here), so we could cook quickly. We §185

all ate our evening meal together, then drank tea. During this period, we alternately sang, read, drank, and after this we thanked God."[204] . . . Claassen continues in the same letter: "N.N. have been excommunicated from the church. . . . N. [a different one] has been outside the church since October 12; he has been excommunicated because of his stinginess and deceit. N. N. [the first two] have been excommunicated because of slandering the brethren. The cows and the contract have been the cause of this. [One is able to see that earnest behavioral discipline is practiced.] . . . I must tell you, dear wife, that I like this place. The most difficult burden I have is the need among the brethren, for there is almost no bread, and no money, nor do we know how to meet this need. On the day before yesterday the brethren sent me a list of the bread provisions; it was a sorry sight. Now I am supposed to give advice, but I have none; I know that the Lord still lives, and in His time He will help according to His good will . . . . December 18 . . . . Yesterday evening [thus exactly at that time when the thunderbolts of brotherly, loving soul care were being forged in the Molotschna; compare B.B.'s letter, December 14-19, Gnadenheim], the brethren were together; everything went well, we exhorted each other in a brotherly manner, so that we will take up new courage. The Lord of peace will be with us . . . . Sunday, January 3, 1865 . . . . Things are going fairly well here. By the grace of God, the brothers and sisters have become happy again in God's mercy. Love and unity rule again . . . . Johann Claassen." b) On the same date, Johann Claassen, nephew and foster son of the former, writes to Mrs. Claassen, Liebenau: "Beloved mother! . . . . The dear Savior often leads His children in wonderful ways. Although He has disciplined us, He has then dealt with us in great love. Before Christmas almost everybody, or all brothers and sisters, were still lukewarm and inactive. Father once went to the Kuban [where the majority of the brethren lived, Claassen lived on the Ovetschka], to help in correcting disorder. When he returned in a week, he was completely joyous and encouraged. With a glad heart he reported what the dear Savior had done to the brothers and sisters, how all disorder had been ended, and how they now had a warm relationship . . . . Johann Claassen." All of these works of repentance and purification had occurred before the arrival of the letter of B. Becker of December 14-19, and Huebert's of January 2 and 13, and of his wife's of January 11, as may be seen from the following letters. This was that "Claassen" for whom in these difficult times brethren, such as Elder Lentzmann, and others of like mind, and B. Becker, G. Wieler and like-minded others, had only the whip of angry satyrs, or legal threats, as seen in arrogant soul care and threatening church discipline. Each is judged by his words, Claassen as well as his opponents.

§186 6. At this Time the Molotschna Authorities Summon Claassen

before their Court.

a) Sister Claassen writes to her husband on January 11, 1865, from Liebenau: ". . . Now I beg you to be obedient to the brethren and come back, for God cannot be with you in the way in which you are now against each other . . . . Katharina Claassen." b) This summons to an accounting is also mentioned in a letter from Heinrich Huebert, January 13, 1865. This one, and the next letter of January 2, which present this worthy man in his most unfavorable light, as weak and yielding, as was stated in a previous footnote, and as is abundantly apparent from a comparison of his letters with Jakob R's diary notation of December 6, and B.B.'s letter of the 14-19th of the same month. Only after God, through Claassen, had tamed the "inflated apostles" and leaders of excessive exuberance, his former "closest brothers," could Huebert, supported by the circle of men mentioned in section 4 above, become for the M.B. Church that for which God had given him to the church. He writes: "Liebenau, January 2, 1865. (1) To the church on the Kuban, in God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ! With this greeting of the Apostle Paul in the second letter to the Thessalonians, verses 1 and 2, I, your servant, come into your midst in the spirit. My deepest wish would be that I might be able to say in truth about you what the apostle says in the following section of Chapter 1! I expect to send this letter from Berdiansk, for I have discovered that my letters have not come to you. Concerning this I can only assume that they have been held back in Halbstadt. From Br. Benjamin you will probably receive at the same time an earnest exhortation and a list of members who have been excommunicated by us. [Compare the letter of December 14-19.] This writing has been read to the whole church and approved by all. I would like to report something, from my viewpoint, of the events which have occurred here since the absence of Br. Benjamin. Several of you who were still here know of the relationship between Brother Benjamin and myself until the time of the meeting of the brotherhood in Landskrone on July 13. All of us who were opposed to him, acknowledged our error, humbled ourselves and were reconciled. But this had not happened according to the devil's wishes; his plans, as always, were to divide and separate the flock of Christ. The matter was to be raised even higher on the pinnacle of the temple. New reports from the Old Colony, no doubt brought here by impure souls, of excommunications of many members again aroused the suspicion that autocratic methods by Brother [Gerhard] Wieler and Benjamin [205] had crept in there, especially since according to the teaching of the apostle, there is a possibility that false teachers and deceivers will arise from among the believers. The time came when Br. G. Wieler also came here to put everything on the right track. I and Br. Jakob Franz spent the night of December 15 to 16 in Ladekopp; then the brethren of the Old Colony also came there: G. Wieler, Peter Neufeld and

Benjamin Nickel. I did not find in Br. Wieler that which I had expected. We had a mutual exchange, and we forgave one another what we had against each other personally. On the next day, that is, December 16 . . . my wife said that brethren from the Old Colony had also been at our house overnight. Br. Berg, Koslowsky, and a young Epp. These had said that they had been excommunicated, together with several others, but not really by the church, but only by Brother G. Wieler, Heinrich Neufeld and a few others. Through this they had come to the conclusion that the authoritarianism of the brethren named above only irritated the church. Being of this opinion, they joined a group of twenty brethren, including Abraham Unger, Cornelius Unger, Heinrich Epp, and several of the oldest brethren. They had come only to inform Br. Benjamin of this, and to declare that they would not recognize this ban. I was amazed to hear this, and reflected on it. I found my preconception of Wieler and Benjamin somewhat confirmed by this. Now these returned from Elizabethtal. Since they on their trip here had been given hospitality by those of Liebenau, and had drunk and eaten together, I also did not let it trouble my conscience too much, but I received them and ate with them. Br. Daniel Fast and Koop from Tiege were also with me. Now they also told us the full story, with an appearance of honesty and unanimity, of how erring brothers and sisters, instead of being helped up, are always knocked down. They were able to present the whole affair in such a way that it seemed that God could no longer tolerate such action. Brethren, I believe I can guess your thoughts about that which I have written. You will agree with me: here the old enemy appeared, not as a roaring lion, but as an angel of light. He may already have rejoiced at his victory, but this time—glory, praise and worship to the good shepherd Jesus Christ!—it was of short duration. (20) On the following day, Friday, the brethren held a meeting in Gnadenheim [December 18, 19]. I went there with the previously-mentioned brethren, Daniel Fast and Koop, determined to leave the introduction and presentation of the whole matter to Benjamin,[206] and to wait for the help of the Lord. The Lord strengthened me in this, so that I was able to perceive the whole situation in the church. I at once felt what I had to do: but my part was left till the end. Before the whole church I confessed my error and asked for forgiveness. Some forgave readily, but three of the brethren found this difficult; nonetheless, they also forgave. Now I asked the church for advice, since it seemed to me that it would be better for me and the church if the church would relieve me of my office. I felt too weak and unskilled, especially where discipline was necessary. The brethren were able to express themselves individually; developments now were similar to those when they forgave me. The conclusion was that I would have time until tomorrow to consider if I wished to attempt to exercise the office further or not. Tired and of a heavy heart, I went to Johann

Friesens, for the meeting was held at Martens, and lay down to rest. It was two o'clock at night,[207] and I fell asleep at once. At four o'clock I was awake again. I asked the dear Savior to reveal His will to me. Soon it was clear to me: if I should relinquish my office, I would cast my lot with him who buried his talent, or I would share the fate of Jonah. I told the congregation that if they would support me with their prayers, I would attempt once again to serve the Lord and them in the power of God. We bent our knees before the Lord, and I confessed my error, but I was able to praise the grace which, with an unseen hand, had sustained me. The joy was great. Here that joy which the devil, no doubt, had hoped for, was ended. But we know, according to God's Word, that He will not abandon His plan. Brethren, we shall triumph: through suffering and bowing we move on to victory, and thus gain the throne, as also He did. I have experienced it: to be able to humble oneself is much more blessed than one would have thought. Why? This costs one's own life, but in return we get the eternal life of Christ. Praise with me, praise with the whole congregation—now, through all these storms, united in love [?!]—that Grace, which endures for ever . . . . In the bonds of the Lord, your servant, Heinrich Huebert." (3) The same to Johann Claassen: "January 13, 1865 . . . . Brother, in the name of the church I must request you to return, so that, in fellowship with the brethren of the Old Colony, the matter can be discussed again. For under the present circumstances we cannot expect the blessing of the Lord to be with us. It is our desire that all of us humble ourselves before the Lord, confess our error before Him, then with prayer and supplication before the Lord, begin again, and see if God will guide us in peace [to the Kuban] . . . . He who loves you deeply, Heinrich Huebert." c) Benjamin Becker, January 9, to the church at the Kuban: ". . . We demand that Claassen return home, for the church has long wished this. . . . B. Becker."

§187 7. Claassen's Humble Response. He writes to his wife: ". . . The Kuban, February 20, 1865 . . . . On February 4 we received your letters and those from Benjamin. We had a day of fasting in our congregation, when we appeared before the Lord with prayer and supplication, that He might help us according to His great mercy. The brethren should not think that we are forming a separate church here, for we are one body with you. Nor have we despised the letters; rather, we have humbled ourselves as a whole congregation. . . . I do not really know yet how I will manage the trip, but as soon as the roads will permit, I will be leaving here . . . . March 12 . . . . I have no money. We are going to try to sell a wagon so that I will have some travel money. We already had a buyer for one wagon, but he wanted to give us 20 rubles less than we had paid for it in the colony. This was too much of a loss for me as well as for [Cornelius] Reimer, since the little money has to go so far, especially for

bread. Nonetheless we believe that a door will be opened, so that I will be able to do what the church has required of me. Just what is going to happen, I do not know. God has a solution for all problems. . . . Johann Claassen."

§188 8. In the Molotschna Church a group is formed to combat energetically the excessive exuberance and the spiritual despotism.

a) The brethren mentioned in section 4 above ("Growth," etc.) from the Ohrloff Church—Daniel Fast, Philipp Isaak, Johann Fast, Jakob Jantz, Abraham Schellenberg, together with Christian Schmidt and others of the same spirit—gathered for this specified purpose, as the Unger circle had done in the Einlage congregation. They did not have the courage nor the clarity to provide energetic opposition when the issues were Reimer's excommunication and Huebert's rough treatment (December 1864). Now, however, when despite all his humility and yielding attitude, Huebert, now in prison, was removed from office for his already forgiven "errors" (December 18), they understood what their duty was (compare the letters of A. Unger and D. Fast, below), and "that they were not of the same spirit as the leading brethren." They wrote the following paper, which prepared the way for Claassen (see *#11*):

b) "Dear Brethren! We, the undersigned, having again in prayer and supplication, and with the Word of God, examined several of the incidents—especially the recent ones—that have occurred among the brethren, confess before God and all brethren who disagree with us that we have realized with greater clarity that several points in the fellowship are contrary to the Word of God. For this reason we feel compelled—without any impure motives—to record these points, so that we do not as hypocrites simply allow these issues to pass. Here they are:

1) "Concerning the removal of ministers. According to Titus 1, ministers are to be blameless, etc. Here and in I Timothy 3 Paul says enough about how a bishop should conduct himself, so that we have no need to elaborate further. No brother in the entire fellowship is so blameless as the leading brethren would have him be, so that no one can be a minister. In order to remove such a person, surely errors previously forgiven [Huebert, December 18, 1864] should not be dug up, nor should it be held against him that he gave shelter to deposed members who had come from a distant congregation [see Huebert's letter, January 2, 1865]. According to the Holy Scriptures, they should not be regarded as enemies but as brethren to be admonished, as stated in II Thessalonians 3:15. Similarly they may not be regarded as deceivers, for according to II John 7, those who deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh are deceivers. This certainly may not rightly be said of them [those who according to Huebert's letter of January 4 had been excommunicated in

Einlage]; no more than of those believers who do not completely agree with us, whether living here or far away among the heathen or elsewhere, but known to us as Christians. Up to the present we could not do without the work of Luther, Hiller and many other men of faith. Let us therefore be careful not to judge them, for in so doing we shall judge ourselves, according to Romans 2:1. Philippians 1:18 states: Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. It is therefore advisable to be careful not to reject the efforts of others who are working for the kingdom of God, since we too are so prone to error, and since so much error has occurred among the brethren, long ago as well as in recent times.

2) "Banning also is not done according to the Word of God. I Timothy 5:20 states: Those who sin, rebuke in the presence of all, etc., and according to I Corinthians 5:4. According to this, six or seven brethren—that is, if they do not constitute an entire church—do not have the right to find others of like mind and judge someone. Menno, the reformer, gives very good advice in this matter, and it should be taken to heart in this issue as well as in many others, since it is known that the brethren do not reject the *Foundation* of Menno; indeed, one of their leaders has recognized the work and presented it, as our basic principles, to high authority. [Apparently G. Wieler is meant; see his petition to the Tsar, above?] Also, in their attitude toward the banned ones the brethren contradict the accepted confession of faith as expressed in a catechism [the 'Rudnerweider']. If, in the ban, the leaders of the brethren are relying on the Apostle Paul, who personally exercised the ban on occasion, they should read Acts 20, from verse 18 to the end of the chapter, as well as II Corinthians 11, from verse 28 to the end. Then they will arrive at a different conclusion, provided they have some of that spirit of discernment of which they are boasting; if not, they should ask themselves if what Paul says in II Cor. 11:12-15 applies to them.

3) "The esteem of persons. This is forbidden in the letter of James, yet it was clearly evident in the last meeting of the brethren, for unreasonable, carnally-minded zealots, who in the previous meeting of the brethren contended for the law, were justified; others—their loving and gentle convictions belittled by some brethren and, on the basis of the new covenant, generally declared to be evil—were threatened with the ban if they did not abandon their convictions and humble themselves to the satisfaction of their opponents.

4) "The God-blessed life. In I Timothy 4:8, 9 we read: Train yourself in godliness, for while bodily exercise is of some value, godliness holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. Blessed is he who has found grace and forgiveness of his sins through the dear Savior, and who remains in Him; he will be inexpressibly blessed, and will have

joy and peace which no one can take from him. Whatever heightens this blessedness must be exercised. And this is the child-like walk in the Spirit with the Savior and the [exercising of] love toward the brethren. He who, in experiencing his blessedness, seeks to share this joy with others and brings them to this fountain, will become even more blessed, since now the joy of others will increase his own. The representatives of the [misunderstood] blessed life among the brethren, however, teach, on the basis of the Old Testament: joyfulness, that is, dancing, including waltzing, as is done in the Old Colony, jumping, shouting, making music, beating the drums, is blessedness. Yet, according to our understanding, the exhortations to joy found in Jeremiah 31 and other passages in the prophets apply to the Jews in that time when Satan will have no more power, and there will be only jubilation and celebration of triumph. Until that time, our work remains: self-denying, believing, struggling, suffering. The passages in Luke: Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy when men hate you, etc., we recognize as always applicable, especially in those instances listed there, when we are rejected by the world. But this is not always the case when we meet. To base the dancing on the parable of the prodigal son is to misinterpret the parable, for it teaches us only how a lost sinner needs to stop on the road of error, come to himself and return to his father, and how the whole heaven rejoices at this. During all the congregational meetings in the times of the apostles we find nothing of such action. We do find how they met at night, when Paul was preaching, or how the places shook during prayer—but they did not shake because of the actions of those assembled. We are all the more doubtful when today faith is being evaluated on the basis of external expressions of joy, whereas the Holy Scriptures depict love as the mark of the children of God. Such things, which are read out of the law, are like those described in Titus 3:9: Avoid dissensions and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. If those rigorous brethren are going to insist that we must keep those points of the Old Testament which are not forbidden in the New, then we should still make sacrifices, for we do not find that this is forbidden. We know very well that Christ is the complete sacrifice, but we also know that Christ is the end of the law. Christ is all and in all! That is our motto, and with His spirit and purpose we wish to build ourselves and gain souls for the Lamb; then we shall understand what Paul says in I Cor. 9:19, 20, 21 and also in chapter 10:32, 33.

5) "In this sense, dear brethren, we are prepared to go hand in hand with you as pilgrims to the heavenly Jerusalem; failing this, to all those—but only those—who are against us, we say—Farewell! For we see, as clearly as you do, the leading brethren, that thus far we are not of one spirit with you. But do not say that we went out from you; for then you would be doing to us according to the example of Diotrephes, III

John 9, 10. You, who wish to be held in high regard, will not receive us, but prevent those who wish to do so. You put us out of the church, and with us [you put out] many from among you, who stand close to you. You may call our action denial of the cross; we cannot prevent that, any more than we can prevent your other misinterpretations. The future will show if it is so. We believe, at least, that we have acted in the name of the Lord. (6) In conclusion, we have this plea: do not condemn us, neither shall we condemn you. Let us leave this to Him who judges rightly. Up there we shall perhaps agree, for there we shall see everything clearly. Blumenort, April 1, 1865. Daniel Fast," etc.

9. The Excessive Exuberance and Spiritual Despotism in the Chortitza-Einlage M.B. Church. §189

a) This church during the same time also had its "wild year." Despite the fact that those of the Molotschna, with the Becker brothers in the lead, their guilt shared by Johann Claassen, stimulated the ridiculous and unseemly excessive exuberance, all evidence indicates that the chief proponent of this religious aberration, and the prime originator of this terrible spiritual tyranny was Br. Gerhard Wieler. All letters and written documents, as well as all oral reports we have received from 1866 until the 70s, present him in this light.

b) Johann Wieler, the younger brother of Gerhard, writes to Johann Claassen: "Einlage, February 4, 1865. Dear Brother Claassen, beloved in Christ Jesus! Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. [We present only the most noteworthy parts of the very long letter.] A conference of the brethren was called, where the brethren confessed their errors and shortcomings to each other. [This probably was a practice adopted from the Molotschna, probably stemming from the days of Wuest but now perhaps distorted.] Those who had no pretensions against anyone were declared to have died, since they could not distinguish between light and darkness. The brethren parted without having been reconciled, each aggrieved by the other . . . . I constantly asked myself: Where do I find similar actions in the Word of God, where is it written, that the flock of Christ is to be fed in this manner? . . . Gerhard Wieler gave me the harsh response, that it was none of my business how he was building! . . . As I had expected, such treatment of the souls made quarreling and fighting a daily occurrence in our church. Gerhard Wieler mercilessly attacked those brothers and sisters who were lacking in understanding: all who would not humble themselves before him were excommunicated without discussion . . . . The poison, which came into the church and produced such tragic consequences, came from G. Wieler. In G. Wieler's opinion I had earned the ban [because of a difference of opinion], and he himself, as he had often done in his

intractable manner, had forbidden me to have fellowship. On one Sunday morning in the end of November [1864] the congregation was to judge between G. Wieler and myself; the conclusion was that I was justified and G. Wieler was given time for reflection to abandon his stubborn ways; otherwise, he was to be banned. [Johann Wieler went on a trip for a week.] . . . returned to Einlage on Sunday, and while I was calmly sitting in Franz Wieler's home, suddenly G. Wieler appeared from an adjoining room and banned me from the congregation of the saints. He had asked his wife not to receive me nor to give me anything to eat. I responded calmly that he, because of his treatment of souls, had long ago been banned by God from the congregation of the saints . . . . During this week G. Wieler had been at Heinrich Neufelds [minister in the church; see #141, May 7, 1862] and had pronounced misfortune over that house; this had intimidated H. Neufeld. Benjamin Becker [Heinrich Neufeld's son-in-law] now went . . . among the brothers and sisters, in order to confront G. Wieler forcefully . . . for the latter had trounced Becker and forced him to humble himself to the dust in order to avoid excommunication. On the following Monday there was . . . a conference [meeting of the brethren], where Gerhard Wieler was, first of all, asked to justify his apostleship and to demonstrate the significance of his position. With energetic determination he frightened the people with banning and removal from office, so that no one was able to say anything against this unexpected turn of events; instead, all bowed before the iron fist of Wieler, following the example of Heinrich Neufeld. Benjamin Becker and G. Wieler, who quarrelled about rank, threatened each other with fists and, in the name of Jesus, banned each other. Each repeated and emphasized this several times, since neither believed the other. Nevertheless, G. Wieler gained the victory in this struggle, and Benjamin Becker was regarded as banned, while other brethren, intimidated by this vigorous action by G. Wieler, confirmed his apostleship. I, without being granted a hearing or being heard, was banned by the same congregation which two weeks ago had justified me and banned G. Wieler; now he was justified. [In a later meeting of the brethren, G. Wieler banned his father, who had protested against these procedures, as well as another twenty brethren, Abraham Unger and others, as is already known; Heinrich Neufeld explained:] 'an apostle has the authority' [to ban without the approval of the church] . . . . On the next day Benjamin Becker . . . at once very humbly(??) asked forgiveness of Gerhard Wieler, received his blessing, and went to the Molotschna, to appear there with the same honor as G. Wieler . . . . Johann Wieler, Abraham Unger, Jakob Koslowsky." [All signatures are in the hand of J. Wieler.]

c) Abraham Unger to Daniel Fast. "Einlage, February 12, 1865. . . . In the few hours when we were able to be together, I noticed that you are

one of those who, with all earnestness, or, in the words of Paul, with fear and trembling, are working out their salvation. . . . I am ashamed that, even if I did not remain silent, I have not long ago withdrawn from such a fellowship. . . . I therefore advise you to oppose boldly those false doctrines, as the Word of God bears witness to your conscience. [A fruit of this exhortation no doubt was the writing in 8.] And if they do not hear you, then save your soul. . . . It is the same spirit as the one in Kronsweide twelve years ago! . . . It is the same spirit as the one in the Molotschna Colony three years ago [during the Antinomianism in the 'unbalanced year,' winter 1861-62] . . . and Benjamin Becker does not regard it as sin, when brothers and sisters ['in the Lord'] dance a waltz [in a 'worship service!'] till the sweat goes through their clothes! Brother, this foolishness is breaking my heart. . . ."

§190 10. Johann Wieler evaluates conditions at that time in the M.B. Church in both regions, as recorded in his "My Thoughts,"[208] June, 1882. "In a word, there was greater concern for the pleasure of the Christians than for the solution of problems about the Kingdom of God. As a result of this one-sided approach, our church got onto the wrong track and was threatened with destruction. By pursuing spiritual joys, our church developed characteristics which distanced it increasingly from Christian gentleness, careful behavior, brotherly love, humility, compassion, demonstrating a divine likeness. Instead of this there was spiritual pride, careless behavior, pride. . . . A caricature of sad erring still comes to mind when I think of our church in that period. Only God's grace was still mercifully with His people. He still found something good among His sheep who had partly gone astray. In those days there were always some brethren who repeatedly recovered their balance and tried to use their influence for good among the other members. . . ." [August, 1882] "In the church in the Old Colony, in the Province of Ekaterinoslav, it was the honored, now deceased Abraham Unger who provided energetic opposition to this unrestrained movement. . . .[209] Brother Unger always had an idea which remained with him during all the storms: it was that the church of God was to be quiet, honorable and loving [see his letter of June 15, 1861, *#115*], thus being a witness to the world, and be involved in missions to the family, schools, nominal Christians, Jews and the heathen. . . . In his efforts to carry out these goals in the church, Br. Unger had to endure much opposition from the opposing faction, as well as demands to appear before the church, excommunication from it, and other injuries. Through this all he remained steadfast in his convictions, hoping and praying that God would bring about a conclusion which would honor the Lord."

§191 11. Johann Claassen's Arrival in the Molotschna and the Chortitza Region, and his Work There (May 4-July 20, 1865), or: "Documents of the June Reform."

a) (1). Claassen's letter, April 19, 1866: ". . . You will remember, dear brothers and sisters, the stern order I received from the brothers and sisters in the Molotschna that I go there at once. On April 15, 1865, I left the Ovetschka . . . for the Molotschna. . . . The brothers and sisters gave us their blessing. There were three of us: I, my Jacob and the young Isaak Koop. . . . For several days we had a very difficult journey. On Tuesday, May 4, 1865, around supper time, I arrived at my home. On Wednesday, the 5th, I left again. On Friday the 7th, I went [on foot] to the Old Colony with Bernhard Penner. On May 17, I returned from the Old Colony, spent four days in Liebenau, later another five days, then seven days, then four, then one, and then nine days. On July 20, 1865, I left for the Kuban. Our travelling group was: I, my Jacob, my sister-in-law and her children, Abram Dyck and Benjamin Becker."

(2). At about this time Abram Unger writes to a certain Brother F.: "During this entire period of disorganization Br. Claassen of Liebenau was at the Kuban, and returned in the past year. He found that Brother Huebert was already in prison because of the Russian sister, even though he had not baptized her. Claassen was also sought immediately, and was forced to remain in hiding until now. I believe that the Lord will restore many things through him. He also visited our colony, and I wrote him, inviting him to visit me, but he did not do so; indeed, he visited no one, and joined our opposing faction, probably with wise foresight. For now I hear that in the Molotschna he has overturned everything, and forgiveness has been asked of those who had been excommunicated, for example, Reimer and others, while those who were removed from office have been reinstated. Other foolishness, such as drums and dancing and things of that sort, has been ended, and the friendly, brotherly attitude toward those of a different opinion restored. . . . Claassen has written to Heinrich Neufeld, asking him to come; apparently the whole affair is going to start here now. May the dear Savior grant that all who have once become believers . . . may be united, but in truth, so that everyone may humble himself before the Lord because of the things that have happened, and then sing: Heart and heart united. . . ."

§191(2) b) The June Reforms [210] (cf. *#121*)

"Items dealt with by the brotherhood meeting on June 26 and 27 in Gnadenheim.

"For this meeting the church already assembled at noon on Saturday, and because there was much to discuss, they remained in session without interruption all night until Sunday evening, on which day the church united for a day of prayer, repentance and fasting.

"After due preparations had been made, a number of matters relating to the continuing existence of our church were discussed at this meeting. Some items were first raised and then dropped, only to be brought up again later and resolved as follows, without regard to the order in which they were dealt with there.

"1. The question was raised whether Br. Bernhard Penner has the status of an assistant minister or a minister. After the church had weighed the matter, it was evident that he was not a minister, but rather that he had only been assigned as an assistant to the minister, Br. H. Huebert, and was now in a probationary period, with the future depending on the further action of the church.

"2. To what extent do the obligations of the minister and the church differ? The resolution was to this effect: Since the minister does not choose the church, but on the contrary, the church chooses the minister, a brother from her midst who is considered capable and has the confidence of the church, to watch over them, thus it is the duty of the minister to serve the church and carry out whatever decisions the church may make. In return, the church is obligated to obey her minister as the shepherd of her soul as long as he remains true to the pure teaching of Christ. If this should not be the case, the church shall call him to account and admonish him. If the minister does not accept this admonition, he is to be deposed from his office and the office is to be given to someone more worthy. Meanwhile the church must keep in mind that the minister who leads well is worthy of double honor.

"3. What is our understanding of the ban and accompanying marital avoidance,[211] according to the Scriptures? Herein we believe and confess that we must also ban a person whom the Scripture excludes from the kingdom of God, but marital avoidance is not to be practiced in addition. Nevertheless, adultery already separates marriage partners without any action on our part, as the dear Savior Himself teaches.

"4. How do we regard the arbitrary action of a minister or individual members who excommunicate others without church sanction? Since experience has clearly taught us that through arbitrary, independent action and excommunication, members have been isolated from the church without having received a just hearing, indeed, because many injustices have occurred, the church believes this to be a biblical procedure: in the event that a member becomes guilty of an offence, the church alone has the sole right to take action and to pass judgment on the offender, whether it be to excommunicate the guilty party or to forgive him; and in no case may individual members be permitted to take such action. No exception is to be made in reinstating the penitent.

"5. Was the deposing of Br. Huebert[212] from his ministerial office legitimate or illegitimate? After the brethren had thoroughly discussed

the proceedings which deposed Br. Huebert from office, it was established that in a church meeting at Landskrone, when asked to account for his negligence [213] in performing the duties of his office, Br. Huebert had apologized to the church and promised to improve; in fact he had promised and resolved to lead the church in the future to the best of his ability. Thereupon the church forgave Huebert. But Br. M., who was also present, followed his own ideas anew, resumed his superior attitude, and after the conclusion of the meeting, sought out a number of brethren who had remained on his side and shared his views to agree to his plan to influence others, and then together oppose the resolution. The next day, Sunday, at the meeting in Gnadenheim, they again deposed Huebert without being able to accuse him of new offenses. Considering the course of events in this matter, since the deposition of Br. Huebert had actually been previously decided by several brethren and then imposed on the rest of the church, and since the conscience of Br. J. M. had become disturbed at the instigation of another brother, and he had admitted at a meeting in Blumstein on June 12 and 13 that the matter with Br. Huebert was not right, the entire church meeting in Gnadenheim on June 26 and 27 declared this procedure to be unjust.

"6. About the reinstatement of Br. Huebert to his office. After thorough inquiry into this matter, first the brethren on one side, who had sinned at Huebert's deposition, confessed their wrong. Thereafter Huebert's wrong was considered. But now it was not clear to the church whether it was the Savior's will that Huebert should hold the office anew. Finally the church reached the consensus to let the dear Savior decide the matter through the lot. But before the church moved to the (casting of the) lot, the brethren in turn, having been previously challenged, raised their voice loudly to God with the plea to reveal His will to us. As soon as this had happened, the lot was written on a piece of paper; on one side—'I remember your transgressions of the last days;' on the other side—'You shall again serve God in the position as before!' Thereupon the brethren, in kneeling position, formed a circle, thus leaving an empty spot in the center. Thereafter one brother took the lot in his right hand, at the same time he as well as all the brethren lifted both hands in prayer to God, the judge of all, that the Lord of all lords would judge this matter. As the brother with the lot in his hand finished praying and said 'Amen,' a powerful Amen suddenly followed from the entire church! As the brother now threw up the lot in the name of Jesus, a quietness prevailed until the brother in a slow voice read the words on the lot lying on the floor: You shall again serve the Lord in the position as before. At that moment, the church shouted for joy with one voice, so that the reader of the lot did not even have a chance to shout. [214] [Cf. *#191[2]*, note re: shouting for joy.] Sister Huebert, overcome with thankfulness for God's wonderful leading, now asked the church in such

warm words for permission to pour out her heart before God, that it was not possible to deny this request; rather we felt moved to quiet the brethren who were prostrate before God in prayer, and to grant the sister's request first.

"7. Now several items to complete the matter discussed in point 4. Several opinions regarding the power of ministers were exchanged, until all the brethren became willing to promise the brother who had been appointed by the Kuban Church, that in this matter we, together with the Kuban Church, now want to abide by one rule which we have agreed on, and in no case leave the government of the church to the minister, elder, bishop or apostle, or any other individual brother, for according to the teaching of God's Word, (it) once for all (belongs to) the entire body of the church.

"8. What are the opinions regarding the ceremonial dance? After everyone had been questioned regarding this matter, it was stated that even if we had power to be like David in this matter, many were overcome by doubt whether it would be right before God, or whether the dear Savior could really be pleased with it, or also whether it would edify seeking souls; in short, all the brethren felt it was right that this subject was discussed, and there was probably not a soul present who would be sorry if dancing did not occur in the future. But this does not mean that we should not leap for joy or shout, if that is how we feel, as it happened at the brotherhood meeting after the casting of the lot, where we heartily loved one another and were glad that each one could pour out his heart before the Lord, be it joyful or sad; yes, we felt the Spirit of the Lord moving among us. As far as music is concerned, we believe that we should diligently seek to foster the same so that it is lovely and sounds well and as much as possible forestall offending souls thereby, rather we should (much more) practice that which edifies many.

"9. Regarding Jakob Reimer's excommunication. The manner of Jakob Reimer's excommunication was not regarded as proper because Br. Reimer was not given opportunity to make a statement to the church. Those brethren who participated in the excommunication, such as: the assistant minister, Bernhard Penner, Benjamin Becker, Isaak Koop, Heinrich Unruh, Franz Klaassen, Jakob Delesky (Peter Stobbe, included by chance), have apologized to the church for their precipitate action and Br. Reimer was again regarded as a brother and was given liberty to make a statement to the church, and at once felt it necessary to apologize for his unrighteous walk[215] whereof the Kuban brethren and sisters would testify, if necessary. Should the Molotschna brethren and Br. Reimer come to an agreement in the case, forgive him and love one another,[216] then the Kuban brothers and sisters will also gladly forgive because they also want to have forgiveness. The brethren who

participated in Reimer's deposition only later told Br. Huebert, who was still the minister and should necessarily have been called to counsel, thus showing great disdain for him.

"10. Peter Dueck's excommunication. Brother Dueck's excommunication also occurred one-sidedly, for which Br. [Benjamin] Becker gave occasion by the way he acted and his harshness, wherefore he also should apologize to Br. Dueck.

"11. Regarding the strict prohibition of greeting others outside our fellowship with a kiss. This prohibition was already lifted [217] before the arrival of the Kuban brethren, and (it is) resolved with regard to this greeting that the brethren should allow themselves to be instructed by the Spirit of God, and should follow the same and consider that the Word of God says: When you greet your brothers, what thanks have you? [Do not the publicans the same? concludes the text, Matt. 5:46.]

"12. Regarding the destruction of pictures. [218] Only incidental mention is made here regarding this matter which was concluded at the first brotherhood meeting on June 1 and 2 in Gnadenheim. The majority of the church, which did not agree with the already implemented forcible method used to motivate disobedient members to obedience, proved that the church of God has other means at her disposal to achieve obedience. In addition we note for the future, that our church members have not had any pictures of saints to revere. Brother B. shall pay for or make amends to Brother S., whose artificial partridge Brother B. tore and destroyed. Brother Peters from Gnadenheim apologized for his behavior in this matter.

"13. Regarding the use of the tambourine. There have been numerous discussions regarding the tambourine in the last three [219] brotherhood meetings at which time the consensus of the majority of the brothers and sisters emerged, because—as the brethren and sisters believed—much offense and division had arisen because of the tambourine, it should not be used in the future.

"14. The following as a supplement for the future regarding J. M. Br. M. who for several years, through his selfish manner and dictatorship over consciences, knew how to acquire such power that most souls feared him, even advocated a teaching that attacked the person of Christ, namely: 'Christ had lusted to sin,' and more such things that ran counter to the wholesome teachings of Christ. In addition he tried to reverse the decisions of the brotherhood meetings which were praiseworthy and did not contradict the Word of God. Even as recently as a year ago, just before his separation from the brotherhood and at a time when M. already counted on that separation, he tried to cause a split, which however failed, so that the church, because of such dealings,

felt compelled to ban him. But even after his reinstatement, he recently transgressed in the matter regarding Huebert as well as in other things, wherefore at the brotherhood meeting on June 1 and 2 of this year, he was told that because his actions had caused such manifold damage and offense, he should hence forth not speak in the meetings or in the brotherhood, but must remain quiet, as he had already promised before his reinstatement.

"In conclusion we only mention that we praise and thank God, that the so-called 'doctrine of Antinominianism' which some of our brethren and sisters misused as early as a year after our secession [220] and in so doing unfortunately succumbed to the flesh, whereby the Kingdom of God obviously sustained great damage, stopped four years ago [221] and no longer has any representatives. Those souls who had strayed into this evil, confessed their wrong at the time of M's excommunication and received forgiveness.

"Those resolutions were read publicly at a brotherhood meeting in Gnadenheim on August 4, 1865." Thus far the "June Reforms."

11 (2). A Note Concerning (6.) "Shouting for Joy." §191(2a)

One should note how carefully the fact of shouting for joy as well as other minor details have been recorded! Claassen clung with fanatical determination to these childish practices which had already become orthodox ritual. Taken by themselves, they were pure *adiaphora*—insignificant forms or "middle things," neither good nor evil—but in our own culture, given our present temperament and practices, as unthinkable as the clothes worn by the holy ones of God in the Orient (as well as in the Greco-Roman world): an Abraham, a Paul and his contemporaries, both male and female. Given our present traditions and customs and our psychological frame of mind, we would find their mode of dress grossly immodest and highly provocative and therefore, sinful. In similar fashion we could not eat while "reclining on couches." The phrase we are given reads "And they sat at table" but in the original text it is "And they reclined." This information is given for those "Huepfer" and their offended antagonists, as well as for the "breadbreakers" and those who think that everyone speaking one of our European tongues should be addressed with the informal "you," etc., etc. The old languages have no equivalent for our present "Thou" (or the German "Sie"]; as, for example, the Dutch have no such term as "Thou," but address God with "ye"—"Gij." All of this is mere "quarrel about Caesar's beard," and even less meaningful than the disputations about "eating meat" in Romans 14. Does anyone suppose, on the basis of the Word of God and the full illumination and power of the Holy Spirit, that

God would create identical patterns of worship in gestures, clothing, melodies, etc., etc., in Greenland as well as in our South-Russian steppes, in London, Berlin, Paris, St. Petersburg, China, Japan, India and Africa? If Claassen could not rid himself of the notion that one cannot do without jumping and shouting in holy enthusiasm, nor ought to, then that is but his "blind spot" which he got from imitating Wuest's leapers. We are no less "happy in the Lord." We express our joy in word, in song, in the sparkling or sorrowful eye, or simply allow our joy to glow heavenward in worshipful thoughts, heartfelt praise, and in the vibration of our entire inner being, like incense rising to the throne of our eternal Father and the Lamb worthy of praise through the "agency of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 9:26-27). We do not wish to condemn the shouters and "Huepfer" unduly: they were initially excited by the knowledge of complete salvation (cf. Pastor Dobbert's account: "Pfarrer Wuest," Forchhammer's letter to Kappes, November, 1860, and Claassen's letter in July, 1861 to his family). The South-Russian Mennonites had no suitable means in their speaking, singing, perceiving, or thinking, to give adequate expression to this all-encompassing redemption through God's grace. The old wineskins simply were not able to contain the new wine. However, the original, completely naive and artless state of new-found joy can exist in the ecstatic condition for only a few moments, and to try to prolong this state creates an abnormal emotional state that is more manipulated than real, and in the final stages becomes an expression of fleshly lusts (cf. A. Unger's letter under 10 to Br. F.). The desire for emotional release of this sort has particular appeal for people who are emotionally unstable and who want to "feel good" and long to be emotionally aroused ("neurotics" writes Jakob Reimer in a letter to Claassen) and eventually led them to the "Antinomianism" and "Apostleship." Others, after a painful realization of what was happening or because of shameful recollections, fell prey to rationalism or total indifference, religious complacency, or into complete religious apostasy. Claassen continued to hold fast to the necessity for this sort of expression as one of the most naive amongst them all, "until things became too gross even for him" (Diary of Reimer, July 4, 1865), when he saw the influence of the timbrel and dance along with vivid recollections of spiritual and nervous demoralization and the "spiritual despotism" of the "mad year." Had anyone tried to institute a more radical reform in connection with the jumping and shouting, and in terms of firm conference decisions than Claassen himself wished, the whole work of reform in the summer of 1865 would most certainly have come to nothing at all. On the one hand, Claassen was accepted by Abraham Unger, Daniel Fast, and Abraham Cornelsen, and on the other hand also enjoyed the complete confidence of men such as Benjamin Becker and Heinrich Neufeld, and both sides could respect his innate honesty and

purity. His sympathetic manner, his warm "love for the brethren," his ability to be flexible and gentle like a fine diplomat, yet always for the supreme purpose of discovering God's will only, and to fulfill it, made him, in the hands of God, into the savior of the M.B. Church. That the consequences of the "June Reforms" were more far-reaching than the wording of the minutes and sharper in their effect than had been intended is typical of such situations. They were sharper than Br. Claassen wished them to be, since he was a man who always dealt with a soft touch in church matters (as we have discovered from personal experience). Every major statement of a reforming idea arising from the necessities of life results in more drastic consequences, in both the smaller and larger circles, than the tone of the statement itself: Luther, in his Theses of 1517, did not yet have the *Confessio Augustana* of 1530 in mind. In any case, after this event the M.B. Church in the Molotschna and in a few years' time the whole M.B. Church in Russia and North America became more like the *Kleine Gemeinde* (more puritanical in attitude, somewhat melancholic and formalistically-ascetically pious) rather than like the "Huepfer." That was the way the author found it when he became a member of the M.B. Church in the summer of 1866 at the Molotschna—only one year after the June Reforms! Mennonite to the core, in temperament. For example, with respect to music there is not one church amongst fifty M.B. congregations in Russia that uses music in the regular services (although in some private meetings and for special festivities some choirs made up of the music groups of the younger members of the local church do participate). In contrast to this, the Mennonite Church at Gnadenfeld—once the mother church but now the strong opponent of the M.B. Church—has placed an organ in its sanctuary—probably the only (?) Mennonite church in Russia to own one.[222]

Thoughts concerning the right use or misuse of expressions of joy in Christian meetings are expressed by a contemporary of the movements of "excessive joy" and the "despotism" by Br. Johann Wieler, now deceased, in his "My Thoughts," from whom we have already quoted earlier, of July, 1882: ". . . If we ask in the light of God's Word: Does the church of God not have the right to rejoice in the Lord and to express this joy in singing, shouting, clapping of hands, or dancing and leaping in a circle as the Israelities did in the Old Testament when they were saved from the power of Pharaoh and escaped through the Red Sea (Ex. 15:1-21); or at the occasion when David returned from one of the battles with the Philistines (I Sam. 18:5-7); or when he led the procession of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:12-19)? To this question one might answer thus: all believers have the right to be joyful and are in fact frequently encouraged to be joyful. However, to express such joy in particular outward forms and to make a regular

practice of this during worship services is another matter for believers in the New Covenant. Why so? Jesus and his disciples give us the answer to this question in their example in word and deed. We do in fact read of the exceeding joy of the disciples when they returned after having been sent out to the towns: 'Lord, even the devils could not withstand us.' Or of Christ, who rejoiced in spirit and said, 'I thank thee, Father, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes' (Luke 10:21). However, on all these occasions nothing is written regarding the expression of godly joy in the movement of one's members, or dancing in the round, etc. The examples of believers of the body of Christ, with Christ himself the head, concerning which the New Testament gives considerable information, will remain for us the sole standard for our particular life style, and to the extent we have the same spirit, will be normative for us in establishing the patterns of life that will guide us in gaining a right church order as well as the right order in our private life. . . . The Apostle Paul says 'All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient . . . . Do not become a stumbling block, neither to the Jew, nor to the Greek, nor toward the Church of God.' "

§192 12. "The Brothers and Sisters [at the Kuban] were very pleased with the outcome of the matter in the Molotschna District . . ." Claassen relates briefly in his letter of April 19, 1866, written from Tiflis to the churches at the Kuban.

§193 13. Reconciliation in the Molotschna—Jakob Reimer's diary. ". . . On July 2, [1865], Johann Loewen and I [cf. 'Kronsweide'] journeyed . . . to the Molotschna, because our brethren from here, as well as I, were invited to Ladekopp [in the Molotschna] where a general reconciliation was to take place with those who had been excommunicated and those who had left voluntarily [cf. *#8*]. It was July 4, 1865. On Saturday, July 3, we were in Tokmak at the [Christian] Schmidts from where I went with Sister Huebert [223] to visit her husband in prison . . . . Brother Claassen was also at Schmidts; I therefore became reconciled to him first . . . . Those of us who were scattered [the excommunicated ones as well as those who had left voluntarily or had drawn back] . . . met first [in Ladekopp] at tailor Klassen's; from there we all proceeded to Jakob Wiebes (July 4), where the brethren and sisters were gathered. Since Claassen had to remain hidden away, I had to see him in the 'corner room' and to first accept his repimand [on behalf of the church—we had already been privately reconciled to each other]. He accused me of avarice and of failing to exercise love toward brothers and sisters who differed from my opinions and of many other things which had been communicated to him in writing . . . .

Nevertheless, I must admit to the honor of my Lord, that things went much better than I had hoped . . . . Many prayers were uttered and much was mutually admitted and forgiven—indeed, in most cases it was done sincerely. [Only Bernhard Penner, Hermann Peters, and those influenced by him remained aloof.] In general it was very delightful to behold how brethren extended hands to each other and became reconciled, and how they confirmed it with a kiss. The same thing took place among the sisters. I believe the angels in heaven rejoiced as did the Lord Jesus himself Who is the fullness of love . . . . For the night to Tokmak . . . . This was a blessed and joyous night for us and the [Christian] Schmidts, which was spent in discussion, thanksgiving, praise, and prayer almost until morning . . . ."

14. Reconciliation in the Einlage Church. §194

a) "On July 22," Reimer continues elsewhere, "we gathered in Einlage where another reconciliation between the 'enthusiastic' and the 'sober-minded' brethren took place. On the 29th of the month the brothers and sisters met again, a meeting to which all of the believers had been invited in order to bring about a new, inner and complete accord" [which always threatened to be disrupted there for some time, as is revealed in the history dealing particularly with the Einlage M.B. Church].

b) Johann Wieler, in "My Thoughts," August/September 1882, relates: ". . . After Br. Claassen had engaged in a blessed ministry in the Molotschna Church in 1865, he came to Einlage in order to bring about an accord there as well. Because Gerhard Wieler was still in prison, it was easier to deal with those who had strayed. Soon after Claassen's departure, the fruit of his labors became evident. Gerhard Wieler, after he had been released from prison, made a few further attempts in the Molotschna to work together with the 'enthusiasts' [Hermann Peters and his associates], but soon serious friction developed between them, and (in 1866/67) he joined the . . . Chortitza Mennonite Church.

c) "In this way," Johann Wieler concludes, "the Church was enabled to become more mindful of those things which would promote improvement within the group as well as benefit the [Mennonite] brotherhood spiritually . . . ."

15. Doctrinal Statement of the M.B. Church to the Government Representative. §195

His Excellency, Procurator of the General Consistory, the honorable Privy Councillor Brun. [224]

At the time when two of our brethren, Christian Schmidt and Philipp Isaak, visited Your Excellency in Ekaterinoslav to request the

release of our minister, H. Huebert, who was being held in detention, Your Excellency was so cordial and affable as to ask them about the present state of our fellowship, because a schism had occurred in our fellowship through the craftiness of the enemy of our souls. At that time these brethren shared some things orally with Your Excellency, and mentioned that for the sake of unity and general peace, a number of rules had been formulated and agreed upon, which were being preserved in writing by the church, and were being put into practice in life. As always, Your Excellency again took special Christian interest in our struggles and triumphs, and wished to obtain some written statements regarding the most recent occurrences in our midst. Since we have the liberty to entrust ourselves and our concerns to you, because we thankfully recognize how in your hands, these concerns serve to promote God's Kingdom, we feel free to expound the following to Your Excellency:

I. In His counsel, God, through the will of His only beloved Son, our Lord and Savior, succeeded in calling us out of a dead Christendom into a church which was to evidence true Christian freedom in word and deed before the whole world. As a light which is not put under a bushel or table, but is set on the table so that it will illuminate the house, so the good works of the divinely called church should shine in order that the world recognize that God is truly with us, and thereby the Father in heaven be praised. The church that had seceded from the world and separated itself from her set this as its goal from the beginning: to experience its calling from the Word of God and then not to discuss the fulfillment of God's truth with flesh and blood, but to proceed forthrightly—even if she were ridiculed and hated by everyone—to fulfill the recognized will of the holy triune God with as much understanding and strength as had been given her. Persecution by those who hated them started as soon as the church began to serve as salt in the world, and reveal the divine pleasure in the salvation of the whole human race, which had fallen into sin. Their contemporaries falsely accused them of scandalous, sinful transgressions, so that the authorities called on them to answer the charges, and inflicted corporal punishment on some church members without cause. On such occasions brethren commissioned by the church were granted numerous opportunities to express orally and in writing the reasons for the hope that lay within them. Thus when the church sent Johann Claassen of Liebenau to the Ministry of Crown Lands to justify her in the face of false slander by private and government personnel, he had occasion, during his stay in St. Petersburg, to present the complete Confession of Faith of the Rudnerweide[225] Mennonite Church here. These confessions, regardless of the fact that no Mennonite clergy could refute them, were almost or

entirely disregarded. The one demand always persisted: that we could not form an independent church, but must definitely return to the churches in which we had been born, which now hated, persecuted and excommunicated us because we were children of God. Because these demands could not be sufficiently satisfied, false witnesses were again used to defame us before the whole world. In spite of being dragged from Herod to Pilate, our church remained true to its confession and maintained its efforts to add to her divine knowledge in order to attain godly maturity.

II. Then we come to the question whether we, who call ourselves children of God, have done nothing amiss. Have we observed the adage to deprive the enemy of every reason for which he could speak evil of us? Have we always behaved blamelessly toward our brothers in the flesh [226] and given them no offense or annoyance? We must admit, to our own shame, that in the face of the hostile attitude they continually showed toward us, we did not all maintain Christian love, but frequently fought for the honor of the Savior with strange and false zeal, behaving unwisely toward those who are outside, and thereby giving manifold occasion for irritation. Yet because we generally endeavored to search for the evangelical truth and ordered our conduct accordingly, the Lord was gracious toward us, so that we acknowledged and repented of the wrong we committed in ignorance, but which we later recognized, and cleansed ourselves of all the dross that clung to us. Our church grew and increased in knowledge and membership.

III. After many a persecution had come over the church, and Satan, as a roaring lion, had seen that he was incapable of harming us with his blood-thirsty manipulations, he then tried to steal into the flock of Christ in another manner, in the form of an angel. Some brethren who had the respect of the church began to preach doctrines that came from an egotistic spirit, and were contrary to the essence of the Gospel. The admonition which the Apostle Paul gave to bishops and elders in Acts 20:28-32, was not sufficiently heeded. Therefore gruesome wolves invaded the flock and did not spare it, but through lovelessness and a judgmental and domineering spirit brought it to the point where a schism occurred.

Primarily, the church sinned in that: 1. All interaction with the believers who had left the church because of the unrighteous conduct [see 4. and 8. above], or had been thrust from it, was suspended. No kiss or greeting or other friendly encounter in word or deed was permitted to occur. 2. Interaction with those who were outside was spoken of and carried out so roughly that no one could gain confidence in the believers. Instead the world [227] was rejected and provoked to anger because it was regarded with disdain. 3. Finally, the happy and frivolous manner of

expressing joy regarding our liberty in Christ which has become evident recently, and manifested itself in unrestrained playing of instruments [etc.!!]—also gave occasion for annoyance and stumbling in God's kingdom.

IV. But God, who is mighty, longsuffering, patient and of great goodness and mercy, could not allow that the church which He had called and elected for His own praise should be divided and troubled by Satan's craftiness. By His healing grace which disciplines us in order that we may walk circumspectly and righteously in this world, and deny ungodly human character, God succeeded in visiting all [228] believers with His mercy, so that they repented for every disobedience with fasting and prayer. What is impossible with man, is possible with God. Christ's love, which is the bond of perfection, began to show its triumphant grace and to banish [229] the dark enmity of the evil one from the fellowship. The high priestly prayer of our Savior, John 17, had to be brought to fulfillment in us by our heavenly Father.

V. Consequently, 1. the relationship of the church to our neighbors and fellow men was to be based on Philipp. 4:5, 8,9; Colossians 4:5-6; Titus 3:1-2; I Peter 2:17 and other Scriptures. 2. In order to foster mutual brotherly love we base ourselves on Romans 12:10; Ephesians 4:32; 5:21. 3. The worship services of the church shall be organized according to I Corinthians 14:24-27, 40.

VI. Taking the liberty to inform Your Excellency of these things, we request that you not withdraw the love and cordiality with which you have treated us heretofore, and pray that God will richly bless you for all you will do for us. In addition we earnestly ask whether or not those brethren who are languishing in prison [230] can be assisted by your office [231] to gain their freedom. It appears that with some assistance [232] . . . Gerhard Wieler can soon be released; but H. Huebert has been taken from the local jail and imprisoned in a damp hole in the volost in Tokmak, without a trial. How joyfully we would all praise God if our Minister Huebert could soon be with us again.[233] May our Lord Jesus Christ stand by you in all things which Your Excellency does for the glory of the Lord.

If Your Excellency should need further clarification of our case, we would be prepared to provide it, as much as is in our power. Similarly, we would be relieved to be kept informed, at least to a certain degree, regarding the progress in our case there in St. Petersburg, which we humbly request.

Respectfully, the humble servants of His Excellency,
Jakob Jantz,
Christian Schmidt,
church leaders.

Ladekopp
September, 1865.

16. Diary concerning experiences on our travels to the brethren and acquaintances during 1865, December 6 (by Christian Schmidt and Jakob Jantz). §196

a) "In Jesus Christ alone I glory,
In him alone do I find grace.
Any other gospel
Brings destruction and deceit.
Whoever from this goal diverts me,
Whether by little or by much,
Is seeking to seduce me."

b) "In the name of our Lord we begin our visitation itinerary in Ladekopp.[234] We visited the minister, Franz Claassen [of the Halbstadt-Ohrloff Church], and were received by him in a brotherly fashion.[235] We conversed about the great love of our Lord for sinners. Our attention was focused especially on the love of Jesus which binds us together and on the declared will of our Lord that we all be one even as He is one with the Father. In the course of the conversation, Claassen commented that he would gladly lead the young people to the river to be baptized, but that he was not convinced that he himself should be baptized. We were also warmly received by Wedel, the [school] teacher. We exchanged questions regarding the promise conveyed through Abraham and his descendants, and regarding the truth of being born anew like the morning dew. We found our fellow believers to be strong in faith and happy in the Lord. Br. Knak was physically ill, but he had hope of getting well."

c) "Halbstadt. Teacher Bernhard Harder [school teacher and minister of the Halbstadt-Ohrloff Church][236] extended a friendly welcome to us. When we asked him whether he was growing in his new life in Christ, he responded that he himself was often not aware whether he was growing or not; indeed, while reading God's Word he often had to tell himself, 'You have never believed that.' We discussed many other things concerning our salvation and adoption and then took leave of each other after prayer. . . ."[237]

d) "Muntau. In the evening we arrived at [Johann] Martens,[238] and were greeted as brothers. Martens' wife, who had not fully recovered from illness, was sitting near the oven, and rejoiced in having a Lord who helps in all circumstances. Martens, too, confessed allegiance to our Lord. In the morning we visited someone who was ill unto death. We asked him if he had the assurance of the forgiveness of sin, eternal life, and salvation. He responded with a faint 'yes.' We read a passage from II Cor. 5 and commented on it. He appeared to comprehend it—how demonstrably powerful in the hour of death is the Word, 'Today while you hear his voice.' How difficult, indeed, how impossible it often is, to

take hold of the Word when death is at hand. We closed the visit with prayer. The man's wife, deeply distressed, and weeping, accompanied us as we left the room and appeared to have been moved by the Word."

e) "Nassau [Lutheran Colony in the Molotschna], on the 7th. Sister Dielmann [member of the M.B. Church, previously a Lutheran and a sister in Wuest's group] was very happy that we had come to visit her. We fellowshipped about the Word together. When we left for Krueger's, she accompanied us. We were received affectionately. During our conversation, two other families, who listened attentively to the Word of reconciliation, joined us. We departed, having been invited to return soon."

f) "Fast [239] [Johann F., father of Johann F. from Schoenau-Rueckenau] on the hill [Neu- Halbstadt] rejoiced at our visit. He had a number of questions about Romans 9 and the assurance of salvation. [This dear and faithful old man was able to enter into the presence and joy of the Lord seven years later, having been richly comforted regarding both questions] . . . ."

g) "After arriving in Tiegenhagen, we took up lodging at the Minister Martens' [Jakob M.,[240] minister of the Halbstadt-Ohrloff Church, and father of Johann M. of Muntau]. After the initial greetings, the conversation turned to the subject of the mercy of God and the riches of His grace toward us poor sinners. During the discussion, his neighbor, Mr. Wiens, also arrived. He too was able to cite evidence of the wonderful love of God, which he had experienced in his life. We closed with prayer and took leave of each other.

h) "In Schoenau, at Br. Fast's,[241] we met another guest who also loved the Lord . . . ."

i) "Blumstein, the 8th. Brother and Sister Eidsen received us warmly, and we rejoiced with them concerning the grace which we had received in Christ . . . . Accompanied by Br. Eidsen, we went to visit Elder Harder [Johann Harder, see above document under XVff]. He was a man simple in manner and behavior. We found the village schoolteacher there, who was also a searching soul. Nor is the elder's wife, who was confined to bed because of illness, an empty person. Our discussion at first centered on the fellowship of the blood of Jesus our Lord, which binds us together without respect of persons. During the course of our discussion, Harder became more intimate and shared many things with us. Among other things he allowed us to read a letter received from a certain Fast in the Crimea. It revealed an intense longing for the Lord and a compelling need for spiritual fellowship. We kneeled before the Lord, with thanksgiving and prayer for ourselves, for the one who was ill, and for her home. The ill woman was not afraid to have us

see her tears. When we were about to leave, Harder confessed that he had not fully trusted us at first, but that in the course of the conversation he had become convinced that we spoke with integrity. He kindly asked us to forgive him his misgivings. His mistrust had been occasioned by the fact that some of our brothers had been suspicious of him and had maligned him in the presence of some of his members, who, he said, were also searching for something better . . . ."

k) "At Muensterberg we proceeded to teacher Siemens.[242] When we asked whether people who loved the Lord lived there, he answered joyously, 'Yes, I love Him.' He affectionately invited us to come in. After a short visit, we went to the village together to a certain Kliewer, who also loved the Lord [he passed away after 1900 in Herzenberg, after many years as deacon of the M.B. Church] . . . . He himself complained about unfaithfulness and sloth. We were edified by reading Titus 3:4 and sought to impress the truth on him that we are justified apart from works. After we had returned to Siemens', we talked until 12:00 o'clock about the various ways in which our Lord has revealed His love to us . . . and we came to love each other deeply . . . ."

l) "When we arrived in Tiege, we took lodging at Br. Koop's . . . . Towards evening we visited the teacher [of the Society School in Ohrloff], Hermann Janzen,[243] [member of the Ohrloff Church], and listened to the closing hymn and to his prayer. We were received in a friendly and affectionate manner. After being invited into his living room, we talked about our great fortune in being children of our great God and Father, on the basis of which, bound together through the blood of the Son of God, we have been united in a salvation which exceeds all else. After we had returned to Br. P. Koop's, from Janzens, we found that a small company, which included seeking individuals, had gathered . . . . We spoke about the passage concerning Zachaeus, the tax collector, and about the salvation which he received from our Lord. We had a very blessed evening . . . . For dinner we had been invited to a certain Toews [Cornelius Toews, subsequently from Halbstadt. He was area administrator, and had joined the M.B. Church]. We commended to them the love of God, who had loved us and reconciled us through His blood while we were still his enemies, in order that through faith in Him we could be justified and receive peace with Him. They listened attentively to the Word. May the Lord grant that it will bring forth fruit unto eternal life."

m) "Saturday, the 11th, we arrived at Blumenort and took up lodging at Philipp Isaak's [later a farmer in Tiege,[244] cf. above *#4* and *#8*]. We were warmly received. From there we made the rounds and visited the other believers. Everywhere we were received in a fraternal manner. In the evening we gathered at Br. Epp's [the father of Elder

Huebert's second wife], and enjoyed a blessed evening."

n) "Sunday morning we drove to Blumstein for the church service. The text of the sermon was taken from II Cor. 4, which refers to the treasure we have in earthen vessels. Therefore the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us, and therefore also thanksgiving and honor and praise belong to Him alone. The Word richly blessed the hearts of all. . . . In the evening [in Blumenort] we were edified by a passage from John, where our dear Lord asks Peter, 'Do you love me?' Again we were richly blessed—we rejoiced that our salvation depends entirely on the fact that Jesus loves us and that we love Him. Therefore, keep us, O Jesus, in your love."

o) "Gnadenheim, December 14. In the morning we visited Br. Funk—we were warmly received by him and his wife. We walked to the Peters' residence [Hermann, who severed all ties with the church and later initiated the 'Breadbreaker' Church, cf *#119*], in order to acquaint ourselves more fully with his position . . . . We greeted him with the words: 'Peace be with you!' but received the harsh reply, 'There is no peace! Peace, peace where there is no peace; Christ came not to bring peace but the sword and division.' We replied, 'But not between children of God?' He responded, 'You are no children of God; rather you are scribes and pharisees to whom it is said, "Woe, Woe." You strain at gnats and swallow camels, you lead souls to destruction, you are arrogant ones, novices, and chatterers, who distort God's Word, have no faith, no peace, and no salvation.' He considered himself fortunate that he was free from that devil's crowd in which he had lain bound and oppressed. He hoped that the Lord would keep him from falling away from his present condition again. Br. Claassen had brought them together with diseased [scabby] sheep, but the Lord had again led his own forth, and if we would not turn away from our error, we would perish. We were among those who bypassed love and mercy, and went about destroying individuals. And other similar expressions. We told him that he was condemning himself and speaking his own judgment; then we left. The door had barely closed behind us when they began singing loudly in order to still their accusing consciences. Saddened by such an event, we went to our brothers and sisters, related how we had been received by Peters, and exhorted them to remain in the love of the Lord. . . ." [The two itinerant preachers had many similar experiences with the followers of Peters. Regarding one such occasion they wrote], ". . . After further questioning it became obvious that he had come to a clear understanding with the tambourine and was inclined to it. . . ." [After being treated in a similar way on another occasion, the travellers concluded], "that to do and to practice are more blessed than to speak much about laws and commandments and not to practice those things,

as we have experienced so frequently from those who accuse us of lovelessness and mercilessness, we have been very harshly accused by them without demonstration of love. No man of the world has treated us as they did, and that because of their obsession with the tambourine and similar things . . . ."

p) "[From Steinfeld to] . . . Steinbach at Nikolai Schmidts [at that time associate leader in the 'Temple Church'; cf. above, 'Brotherhood' and 'Brotherhood School,' *#51* and *#52*]. . . . In the evening we had an edifying discussion regarding God's mercy to us poor sinners . . . . N. Schmidt took us to Elizabethtal to Br. Klaassen's . . . . After breakfast Br. Franz Janzen (Pordenau) demonstrated his love and took us to Franztal to Mr. Braun (an old brother who was a follower of Wuest but had not left the church). He had long awaited our arrival and rejoiced in a childlike manner that love again had its free course . . . . We drove [from Pastva] to Rudnerweide to the Blocks. Block had left to visit old Mr. Wiebe [cf. 'Brotherhood'; he had likewise previously been an outstanding member of the 'Temple Church' of that time]. We also went there and were warmly greeted by Mrs. Schroeder [Wiebe's foster daughter] and were invited up to Abram Wiebe, who in a very cordial manner asked us to be seated. While we were conversing, three other men who also loved the Lord came to join us. We had a spiritually enriching time and were obliged to stay for tea. We sang and thanked the Lord, and were invited to return soon. We received the impression that the church must pray constantly that such individuals may be brought together into one body . . . .

"May the Lord keep us in a childlike faith in Him and His Word, and grant us humble hearts to love only Him."

Christian Schmidt
Jakob Jantz"

XXV. (2)

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT: A QUESTION REGARDING THE DIRECTION TAKEN BY THE M.B. CHURCH WITH RESPECT TO THE REFORMS AND DECISIONS OF 1865 AND THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN THE LOVE "TOWARD ALL BELIEVERS"

§197 1. We see that the church as typified by these her representatives (#196) bears hardly any resemblance to the time when she was under the strong leaders and rulers during the "mad year" (the fall of 1864 to the spring of 1865). The sympathy that was now extended to her—the author has very clear recollections of this fact—was like a broad stream. All those of the Mennonite Church who were not fanatical in their

hostility (amongst them many earlier "brethren" as well as many friends and relatives of those who had left the church) breathed more freely now that the foolishness and the unseemly behavior during church services, as well as the proud intolerance of the group, had come to an end, even though their original desire for spiritual perfection was unquestionably sincere. The members of the Mennonite Church were, after all, very close neighbors and even blood relations, and had a common confessional base with the Brethren. As already indicated, Claassen's success in the land issue in the Kuban had won him much sympathy. Huebert, who had been held for questioning and investigation, but who had just recently been released, was greatly beloved by a considerable majority of the "Mennonite Brethren Church"[245] and also enjoyed a great deal of love and respect from many of those who had not left the mother church in contrast to the small group of the temporarily domineering "overly joyous" and "strong." His imprisonment worked so strongly in his favor, that a flood of sympathy, love, and adulation arose so that those in society who were most hostile to him were forced to tone down their opposition. It is important to recognize that the congregation in Liebenau, which to that point had been quick to persecute (see the episode with G. Wieler and others), now interceded for Huebert in order to provide bond for his release from the imprisonment where he was being held for questioning. Above one of the songs he composed while in prison, Huebert wrote in his own hand: "After the security which the village community at Liebenau offered on my behalf was denied, and I was forced to discover new resources of patience. . . ." Always known as a law-abiding, sober, and morally upright man of honor, he was now a virtual martyr, pitied all the more and more highly esteemed, because although he did not baptize the Russian woman (the accusation against him) he refused to divulge the name of the person who did. His failure to deal with the "Exuberant Movement" had been excused, and was scarcely remembered any more by those inside or outside the M.B. Church. All anger and resentment was directed without restraint against the "self-made apostles." (G. Wieler, for example, was called "a fallen angel" by the believers of the now purified M.B. Church at Ohrloff when he rejoined the Mennonite Church at Chortitza.) Furthermore, Christian Schmidt and Jakob Janz, who had recently been named as "assistant ministers" (on August 29, 1865) were accepted everywhere as angels of peace by those who had withdrawn from the mother church, except by a large number of those living in the district of the "five elders" who had not become irreconcilable enemies or been grossly offended by the "renegades." Great things were expected of these men amongst the believers and the revived Mennonite Church as well as from the moderates of the "Friends of Jerusalem" group, such as Nikolai Schmidt and Abraham Wiebe, who never ceased being pietists. (We vividly recall a glorious sermon on the

Prodigal Son preached by Nikolai Schmidt—now long since deceased but who at that time had left the church at Gnadenfeld and joined the "Temple Church.") It took place in the winter of 65/66 at a private gathering in Alexanderthal in a group meeting of revived, penitent souls. His glowing countenance, the tears in his eyes, the deeply moving, vibrant voice, his warm personality, and simple yet suitable mode of dress made him the most appealing of evangelical ministers and the ideal man—this sermon remains today, after a lapse of almost 45 years, an unforgettable event. In all he said and did and in his total being he was a true ambassador of the Father to all lost sons and daughters. As far as the two brethren J. Janz and Christian Schmidt are concerned, they were indeed the ideal messengers of love and peace. The fruit of an early conversion, they were young men in the full bloom of youth and youthful innocence (in so far as it is possible for any son of Adam to show this), whose friendliness and love for God and man was much in evidence, and who were still without that hardness that the trials of life invariably imprint on all of us. With all these things in their favor, they won the hearts of all those who were unprejudiced. Schmidt was the joyfully-believing Pietist and Wuest-enthusiast (one of the few non-Mennonites who won for themselves and their descendants all the legal and civil rights of the old Mennonites who had migrated to Russia "before 1874 and subscribed to the Mennonite Confession and a subject of Russia" as well as the military exemptions of 1874. He was a descendant of the German wool workers' colony at Poltava). At that time he was "our Wuest" in the M.B. Church, just like the Minister Bernhard Harder in the Mennonite Church, but free from all stupidities and nonsense in his teaching and general style. He was, in fact, a Methodist preacher in the best sense of that word. Janz, on the other hand, was a descendant of the first Mennonites (from amongst the Russian-Polish, probably from the "Old Flemish" Mennonites), whose somewhat melancholy, friendly personality, renewed and saturated with the happy gospel of Wuest in the M.B. Church, was typical of the best Mennonite preachers of those days. According to my personal recollections, this is a true portrait of these two brethren.

2. a) Have the hopes which warm-hearted, mild-mannered and pious Mennonites held in those days been realized? Have the "works" produced by the M.B. Church in this regard been "satisfactory in the sight of God?" Has it gone forth "in this its strength" (Judges 6:14) which it acquired at the June Reforms in 1865 and through these and related leaders given it, always to "discover" what the will of God is and to strive to fulfill that will? (See the petition to Brun.) Has it done everything in its power "according to the will of God and Christ's prayer (John 17) to unite all believers?" (See the same Petition.) Not in §198

our judgment. b) These two men have not yet completely matured in crystalizing their course nor in determining its direction. Even a strong man has difficulty to express his own personal position when a body has made him its mouthpiece (cf. Menno on "excommunication"). The concept of the "fellowship of the saints" was attached too much to one's own church. And where, after the days of the original, undivided Apostolic Church, can one find an example of a corporate body that represents a true, historical, dogmatically pure "Universal Christian Church and fellowship of the saints" without spot or wrinkle? c) People found it hard to understand Nikolai Schmidt in his constant emphasis on sanctification, and at the same time his emphasis on the need for social development and improvement through the school system and other means,[246] which the M.B. Church has been putting into practice for some time now. Nor could the people readily understand the fact that Abraham Matthies and Bernhard Harder had to leave the Gnadenfeld and Ohrloff Mennonite churches respectively, and accept baptism by immersion. The sincerity of these brethren and those closely related to them (such as Elder Johann Harder, etc.) was questioned repeatedly by many church members. The M.B. Church could not grasp the fact—O we thick of head and narrow of heart—that not everyone else was convinced that we knew it all and had nothing worthwhile to learn from anyone else. d) Nor did one develop toward that final spiritual ideal that had been taught by Wuest: the understanding of the doctrine of the spiritual fellowship in love and daily life with the whole "brotherhood" (the original text does in fact use the word "brotherhood"—in Russian translated "bratstvo" I Peter 2:17). Claassen had this consciousness. In St. Petersburg he practiced such fellowship with the Mennonites there as well as with the Baptists in Tiflis. At the Ovetschka, in spite of everything that had happened in the "Brotherhood School" and the "parting quarrels" between him and Nikolai Schmidt, he had intimate fellowship with the latter, as well as with Cornelius Reimer, Jakob Giesbrecht and others, for which he was occasionally severely criticized. e) Jakob Reimer had a complete understanding for the alliance, in the best sense of the word. During the "mad year" he wrote in a letter to Abraham Unger about New Year, 1865: ". . . Dear Brother Unger, I am completely in favor of the alliance; for the true body of Christ consists of all true believers from all confessions and nations, who will come from the East and the West, the North and the South, and will sit at table in the Kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaak and Jacob, and you and I will also be present through the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ . . . ." (During this time Reimer had intimate fellowship with Abraham Matthies, cf. *#51*: "Brotherhood"—an abomination in the eyes of the "high apostles.") f) However, Claassen and Reimer had contributed their most essential service in connection with the June

Reforms, and have never since exercised a similar influence on the entire brotherhood. Humanly speaking, what they achieved through their suffering and sacrificial service in behalf of the church was sufficient.[247] The work of each continued, but in a much more limited sphere. g) Abraham Unger was in favor of the alliance as well, except in connection with the communion service (cf. #223,b). h) From this point on, as more and more people joined the group (in that particular Mennonite situation), a new element was introduced: an element brought in by people who knew nothing substantial about Joseph or Moses, Wuest or Claassen, or Unger, in so far as it made any difference in their thinking. This element is described in the footnote to the June Reforms as "Kleingemeindsch" (having a very narrow outlook, the old-Mennonite style with a strong puritanical bent; ingrown, fearful, and intolerant in thought and life-style like the *Kleine Gemeinde*). However, this new element or attitude could just as well be designated "big-church" with respect to its confessional base in that Klaas Reimer, an elder from the "small-church" and Heinrich Wiens, an elder from the "big-church" were of one mind and disposition in this direction. i) The first real impetus toward an organized Mennonite Brethren Church came from the "Wuest" Mennonite Brethren. k) To these were added, along with Herman Peters, Johann Martins and their followers from 1861 and later, people from the "big church" who had neither theological training nor any practical experience of brotherly living. In this group we must also place Gerhard Wieler, in spite of his many talents and good education. (Johann Wieler had brotherhood experience in and around Odessa amongst the Lutherans and Reformed "brethren.") One must also list the brethren J. and B. Becker and Bernhard Penner with Gerhard Wieler, even though they had been partly influenced by the school of Wuest, but had not fully attained the patterns of thought of that leader (influenced by the unwholesome period of Kappes). All these people, who brought with them this new element or attitude were indescribably narrow and intolerant, as one gathers from their many letters of semi-official (congregational) character (especially those of the Becker brothers); these people never seemed to harbor a thought about church history that went beyond the borders of a common Mennonite framework (although they talked of spreading their ideas throughout the whole world), nor had they ever read a serious book on theology. But they did have warm blood and healthy nerves. These people brought into the M.B. Church the strangling orthodoxy of the "exuberant movement" and the "mad year" during the winters of 1861/62 and 1864/65 respectively. To overcome this false emphasis God sent Daniel Fast and men of similar caliber from the Ohrloff District, where a broader vision and a healthier emotional attitude prevailed. l) After the cleansing of the 1865 episode was completed, there came, as already indicated, those

elements from the "big church" which hungered and thirsted after a new spiritual life, but which nevertheless brought with them their inherited ecclesiastical narrowness and exclusiveness, learned in their former church and now superimposed with some changes upon the new M.B. Church. Because of their large numbers and the outstanding abilities of individuals amongst them, who had come from the Molotschna and Chortitza districts, their influence was carried over into the M.B. Church. m) Abraham Unger (rather out of character) introduced the notion of the "strict baptismal doctrine" which forbade communion together with non-immersed believers to the extreme brethren Becker, G. Wieler and others like them. (See the special account of the Einlage M.B. Church in Chapter XIXff.) This idea soon gained supremacy in both churches. In this respect these new brethren from the "big church" were in agreement with many older brethren who held similar views; only these also wanted to exclude from communion fellowship those Baptists who had been drawn in through the fellowship of Abraham Unger (Claassen, too, had on every suitable occasion practiced brotherly fellowship with them, even though he did not hesitate to criticize some of their practices sharply); and in this they also found older brethren of some importance who agreed with them. Thus it was that from 1863 on it became a regular practice that no converted Mennonite could participate in the communion service unless he was baptized by immersion, and after 1865 it was the accepted practice. n) During the 70s a long and bitter struggle developed against having communion fellowship with the Baptists "because they accept the sword." (Cf. XXIX.) However, God did not allow the matter to conclude with a complete break, although forceful rejections and severe provocations did occur here and there. o) After the turn of the century (c.1900) it happened that an ever-increasing number amongst the M.B. Church, especially also some preachers of influence, began to practice a more extended communion fellowship—with believers of the Mennonite Church as well as with members of confessions who do not require believer's baptism. This came about after wishes and declarations in this regard were presented with clarity and seriousness in the consultative and decision-making bodies of the M.B. Church, beginning in 1881/82 and then repeatedly (first of all by P.M. Friesen and Johann J. Wieler). p) At the annual conference session of the M.B. Church in Waldheim in May, 1903, a "declaration" was issued by one quarter of the delegates representing various congregations in the conference, who, by abstaining from the vote, declared themselves in favor of practicing and continuing to practice fellowship with other Christians. At this point "it pleased the Holy Spirit and us"[248] (with all due respect, we dare to think this was analogous to Acts 15!) to agree unanimously to accept this difference of opinion in love. (One should compare all this with Chapters XXIX and

XXXI.) q) We pray for God's gracious leading! Only when the spirit evident in this "declaration"[249] has been actually realized in a friendly, loving, mutual association by both groups, can the M.B. Church be declared free of a "sectarian spirit"; her fellowship "with all believers" that belong to the body of Christ will be the proof. (See the petition to Brun.) This fond hope has as yet not been realized (1910). r) When this does happen, may the M.B. Church in its considered dealings operate according to its best "understanding of the will of God" which has been given it with respect to baptism and the structure of the church, even if it may have to forego a fellowship with many who only have their names on church registers—nevertheless, she still accepts all true believers, and practices patience with those who may lack knowledge (according to the M.B. viewpoint), and with them celebrates the intimate spiritual joys and life experiences at the Lord's table, after the event which took place around St. Martin's in Elizabethal, as well as some time before and after (cf. XIII above). s) It is to be said with respect to point (o) above concerning the free celebration of communion in the wider circle of the brethren, that in the more recent years since 1900 various elders and ministers from the Mennonite Church have repeatedly conducted such services.

XXVI.
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH OF THE CHORTITZA DISTRICT, FROM 1866 TO 1872: THAT IS, FROM HEINRICH NEUFELD'S DEPARTURE TO THE FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH

§199 1. Deacon Karl Benzien (freely adapted from Brother Heinrich Epp's "Reports" and the author's personal recollections).

a) The Einlage Church still could not achieve that harmonious unity for which all members yearned. The two factions, those of Neufeld and of Unger, deriving from the aberrations of 1864-65, to which newly-arriving members joined themselves according to inclination, could not easily cooperate with each other. Br. Unger's serious, somewhat formal but thoroughly sincere manner repelled many who still recalled with pleasure the time of "great enthusiasm." Even brethren who displayed leadership qualities and felt called to a public ministry, and who would have nothing of those times of excess, found him to be too legalistic and too friendly towards the Baptists. A young brother, Johann Siemens, later highly esteemed and very active in the

church but long since departed, wove more than a few thorns into Unger's crown during those years. "But the Lord does not lack resources." He brought it to pass that in the spring of 1868 a brother named Karl Benzien, deacon of the church of the Hamburg confession at Dirschau in West Prussia, moved into the district of the Einlage Church for business reasons, as an immigrant. At home he had been an industrialist; here he was a farm manager. He was a cordial, gifted, and rather well-educated Christian who was well acquainted with what was a worthy and useful (Christian) church order.

b) A church business meeting was scheduled in Einlage for July 10, 1868, at which meeting Br. Benzien was appointed chairman. The following resolutions were passed: 1) that the church bear the name "Einlage Church"; 2) that the church establish "stations,"[250] besides Einlage, Markusland (the brotherhood settlement named after the former owner, now called Andreasfeld?) and Tschornoglas, etc.; 3) "the members of our church who will serve the congregation are named: elders, teachers, and deacons, which the church itself is to elect. The elder of the church shall serve at baptism, communion, and marriage services; he is especially to comfort and admonish; and in addition to this he is to supervise the keeping of the church registers and to take care of such other written work which may become necessary in the church for which a church seal is also necessary. In like manner, several other matters were clarified in turn. No independent actions may be undertaken, such as baptism, admission or expulsion (of members), without prior knowledge of the elder and of the entire church. Of such actions the entire church must be informed." Compare "June Reforms!" Naturally, none of this was new in the Mennonite churches, and also in the Molotschna Mennonite Brethren Church it had long been fact and practice, even though not in such strict "Hamburg" forms. The Chortitza-Einlage Church had however retained a number of members who, like those extreme factions (later called the "Hermann Peters Church," which had separated from the Molotschna Church) called every kind of business order "babylonian." "Elected like a village mayor"—thus one of these "Hermann Peters Brethren" derided the assistant minister aides, Christian Schmidt and Jakob Jantz, during their deputation tour in December, 1865. Every formal recording of minutes was repugnant to them, especially the "June Reforms." In the Einlage M.B. Church these clear directives were implemented only with great difficulty; and, strangely enough, it was much easier to implement these "laws" through the unknown Baptist brethren, Liebig and Benzien, than through Br. Unger, the "prophet at home." However, later the Einlage M.B. Church, and with it the church at Friedensfeld, became an example in this matter to all other sister churches, also in the matter

of conducting the business meetings of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren. Of course one can have too much of a good thing; and with due respect and esteem for these "Hamburg" practices, it must be said that in these matters, the M.B. General Conference (at its annual meetings) for a time very nearly made a game of it. In the cases of several schooled "practitioners," the means became something of an end in itself. But we—a certain segment which included the author as well—hungered altogether too much after order and method during the years 1866-1870ff. Yet all of this was very necessary for the entire Mennonite brotherhood and today such superior business and recording procedures are practiced more and more, not only in the M.B. Church, but in all of the Mennonite churches.

c) On July 14, 1868, another church business meeting was convened under the direction of Br. Benzien. The chairman asked which resolutions had been passed at the previous meeting and whether all members still approved of them. The matter was confirmed by a show of hands. The chairman moved that the assembly proceed to the election of an elder during the afternoon, and the congregation supported the motion. At two o'clock the congregation was again assembled. After a song and prayer, the chairman asked whether the election should be determined by a majority vote; the suggestion was approved. Br. Benzien and the old Br. Johann Wieler (school teacher, father of Gerhard and Johann Wieler) stepped into a side room in order to receive the votes (an old Mennonite election procedure). After the election, having received a majority of the votes, Br. Abraham Unger was appointed elder.[251] Abraham Unger had received 21 votes, Aron Lepp 9, and Peter Friesen 5. It is evident from this small number of actual votes that a number of brethren still did not participate. "This is how the church was provided with elders and teachers." But because divergent sentiments and views prevailed among the members, and because the Word of God was being interpreted in various ways, things did not go so well, and the situation still left much to be desired. "But the Lord, who had begun this work, knew also how to carry it further."

2. Johann Gerhard Oncken §200

a) In 1869 Brother Oncken (founder and elder of the Hamburg Baptist Church) came from Hamburg and visited the Old and New Danzig brethren (cf. #149) in Southern Russia. He sought to unite the brethren who preached the Word in the Einlage Church. Since Aron Lepp had resigned from his office as teacher during Br. Oncken's stay, the church found it necessary to elect a minister again. But Br. Lepp was elected again. A meeting was scheduled for October 18, 1869, in Einlage, to be held in the home of Br. Unger. Here Br. Oncken ordained the brethren

Abraham Unger as elder, Aron Lepp as minister, and Cornelius Unger and Benjamin Nickel as deacons for the Einlage M.B. Church (cf. #96); likewise Br. Karl Benzien was ordained as minister for the Baptist Church which, consisting of members of non-Mennonite origin, had been established in the Tschornoglas Colony. Unfortunately, Br. Oncken could stay only ten days among the Einlage and Tschornoglas brethren. The Molotschna brethren wanted to have him in their midst as well. but since winter was at hand and the seventy-year-old man had to make the return journey by water and coach, without a travelling companion, he hurried home "and the church was left to itself and continued to work as well as it could."

b) Oncken's account of his journey.

Fortunately we have Oncken's own narrative concerning this visit and his very clear analysis of the relationship between Mennonite Brethren and Baptists, about which false assertions have been made to this very day—either out of ignorance or intentionally. It is very interesting to note, that whereas Liebig was arrested in 1866, Oncken preached in the churches of Chortitza and Schoenwiese in 1869! Oncken writes, in the *Missionsblatt der Gemeinde getaufter Christen* (1869, page 180ff), as follows: 1) "Einlage, Province of Ekaterinoslav, South Russia, October 29, 1869 [new calendar]—I had hoped to send these few notes to you and to my loved ones during my return journey, possibly from Pest, but the long, time-consuming journey across the endless steppes [without railways at the time], beyond which I have not yet gone, and the unanticipated labors in God's kingdom, have kept me here until now. I have been in Einlage for eight days now, and will be able to depart only next Monday, November 1. Here is a church which has separated itself from the Mennonites mainly because of baptism[?]; otherwise it continues to hold to their regulations. [N.B.!] This congregation has been exposed to many siftings, and upon my arrival I still found much discord among the brethren and it almost seemed as if my stay here would be fruitless. After lengthy discussions among them, the Lord enabled me, finally, to gain the confidence of the brethren and I am now to ordain an elder, Br. Abraham Unger, two ministers, and two deacons next Sunday. On Sunday, the 24th, I preached in the [private] school among our brethren, that is among those who have separated themselves from the larger Mennonite Church, and in the afternoon, in the large Mennonite Church in Chortitza, a Mennonite colony, seven versts from here. But life leaves much to be desired. Yet I am glad and blessed in my Savior, and, with the exception of a throat ailment, I feel fine. I dare to hope that through the blessing of the lord upon my humble efforts, some order has been brought into the hitherto existing confusion so that matters here may improve, and that we, in the future, may yet exert a

wholesome influence upon this interesting movement. All of Southern Russia . . . is a beckoning missionfield, and were I but thirty years old instead of seventy, I would dedicate my life to the cultivation of this fallow yet very promising ground. Let us pray the Lord of harvest to send forth laborers. 2) It is November 1 and I am going still further south, to Alexander [Alexandrovsk], ten versts away on the other side of the Dnieper, and from there, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, November 2, to Molotschna, where a similar congregation[252] awaits me. 3) November 4, 1869, on board the steamer, between Nikolaiev and Kherson. I am now on the Dnieper . . . . In Einlage, from where I wrote to you, I have been able to arrange everything which pertains to the ordination of the elders, two ministers and eight deacons [evidently a number of these for the Baptist Brethren]. The congregation there derives from the Mennonites, still names itself after Menno Simons, and adheres to some of the particular views of this reformer. These ordinations were carried out in Einlage last Sabbath [Sunday]. In the afternoon I conducted a missions service which raised an offering of 108 rubles for the mission in China. These meetings were held in a temporary hut to which a wooden gallery was attached which encircled the entire house [Unger's]. We concluded the Lord's Day with the proclamation of His death in a communion service. 4) Apart from this, I have proclaimed the Good News nearly every evening to large assemblies in various villages. On Monday, November 1, in Schoenwiese in the old Mennonite Church, I had an audience of about five hundred, and on Tuesday evening I spoke in Tschornoglas; in Russian it is the name of the nobleman who owns the estate, where about twenty German [from Germany] baptized brethren[253] [families] live. Because the rainy season has begun, I have, upon the unanimous advice of the brethren, given up my plan to travel to the Molotschna since they feared that winter could overtake me unexpectedly. My trip to Turkey [Dobrudscha] will also require at least 14 days and my stay in Odessa probably some 18 days."

3. Mennonite concern within the Mennonite Brethren Church, Chortitza District, with regard to their connections with the Hamburg brethren. §201

"Since Brother Oncken was a Baptist," writes Br. E., "some have concluded that the elders and teachers ordained by him must now become Baptists." (Oh dear! Brother Aron Lepp a 'Baptist!')[254] This concern troubled everyone's mind. Military service and the fact "that we break bread in fellowship with the Baptists" were considered. "The issue of smoking was also frequently raised, a habit which the Baptists do not prohibit as strictly as we do. Even Oncken himself smoked occasionally, which practice also was copied to some extent among us

but which did not serve the cause of peace." All of this was keenly evaluated and the conclusion reached "that it were better if we would separate ourselves completely from the Baptists so as not to lose our privileges. Br. Aron Lepp also agreed to this but Br. Unger, on the contrary, believed that we could walk hand in hand with the Baptists without losing our privileges." The fact that the Baptists "recognize the sword which we consider to be wrong," gave rise to repeated and sharp debate. They, however, contend that it is their duty to submit to the state in times of crises." Thereupon Brother Aron Lepp moved that the Mennonite Brethren and the Baptists establish two churches but yet have spiritual fellowship and the breaking of bread together. This pleased the brethren in both groups and the matter was resolved in this manner. "This is how progress was made toward satisfying the church on both sides, for which we owe Br. Aron Lepp much gratitude." Those who did not enjoy the Mennonite privileges were now numbered with the Baptists. As for the matter of smoking, the church did not want to tolerate it, and Br. Lepp felt that excommunication should be applied to cases involving it. However, Br. Unger believed this to be too severe. Br. Lepp's conviction, however, prevailed and finally it was resolved that smokers not be regarded as members of the church, as a result of which some ten to twelve brethren were excluded, among them people of talent and prestige. This action was a "matter of sorrow to the congregation and caused a great uproar in the world." This is how the struggle continued in the congregation: "one struggle had barely ended when the next one appeared at the door. Because there was lack of unity among the teaching brethren, it seemed that the church would divide once again!"

§201(2) We here append a correction to this and all that has been stated previously and to that which follows, in respect to the tensions created by elements in the Einlage M.B. Church involved in this Mennonite-Baptist struggle. This note follows the record of Brother Lepp, given about the year 1900. The following document was given to us belatedly (November, 1909). Factually it provides nothing new, but it gives expression to the desire of a very old church worker to present himself to posterity in proper perspective.

Report from the Einlage Congregation

"In the year 1866, when Br. Liebig was called to us, a minister's election had already taken place. Br. Abraham Unger of Einlage did not approve of this election because Br. Heinrich Neufeld had been re-elected. This brother had been carried away by the 'enthusiastic movement of exuberance' for a period of time. When he saw the error of

his ways, he confessed the matter, and with many tears asked the congregation for forgiveness. But when the congregation elected him, he did not want to assume this office unless the Lord had appointed him by means of the lot. When the lot was cast, Br. Unger remarked: 'In the name of the Lord!' However, when this also determined the case for Neufeld, Br. Unger and several others withdrew and did not acknowledge the election (cf. *#152/*). This again gave rise to further confusion. There were also other tensions in the congregation created by differences of opinion and interpretation. Some believed they could bear arms. The stage was reached where smokers were not regarded as members, an attitude considered too strict by some. In order to regulate these matters, Br. Liebig was invited, since he enjoyed the confidence of most members. And he was successful in resolving some of the issues, especially by taking the position that Baptists and Mennonites could exist side by side as two separate churches without being merged. He also arranged that Br. Peter Friesen and your humble servant take charge of the situation here [in Andreasfeld] and that the brethren who had withdrawn because of the election not be re-instated until they had seen the error of their ways, which actually happened later.

"This is how things went until Br. Carl Benzien came from Prussia in 1868. He was then asked to chair a church business meeting, and steps were taken to elect an elder. The election results revealed Br. A. Unger as elder and myself as minister. Br. Benzien once again worked towards the unification of the Baptists and our church. I felt then that it was my duty to protect our church. And so there was constant friction between the Baptist-minded, whom Br. Unger supported, and our brethren. The reason why I was opposed to a complete merger with the Baptists was this: 1) I feared that we would lose our privileges in this way; 2) our confessions of faith were divergent; 3) some developments occurred which, in my view, were not proper; for example, Br. Benzien had remarked that he intended to visit our brethren once more in order to pull at the corroded Mennonite sword.

"And thus matters continued until, in 1869, Br. Oncken arrived from Hamburg, and, as we know, performed the ordination of Br. Unger as elder, and of Benzien and my hunble self as ministers. [N.B.! According to Baptist principles of office and ordination, ordination to the office of 'elder' and 'minister' bears equal status, and the ordination of a minister for service as presiding elder need not be repeated. Consequently, the worthy Br. Lepp had received the consecration of a full Baptist bishop.] The reason why I, in those critical times, submitted to ordination by a Baptist elder was solely that I wanted to prevent a division in our congregation. [As is known, Lepp was ordained once again in 1876 as

elder of the Einlage M.B. Church by Elder Janz of Friedensfeld; that is the laying on of Mennonite hands. See note above on ordination by Elder Janz.[255]] With God's gracious help, the work advanced. Special difficulties were created once more by the activity of Br. Eduard Leppke, who defended the anti-Baptist faction too vigorously. Unfortunately, I too allowed myself at first to be carried away too far by him, but I soon realized and regretted this error. [See further under 'Baptists as super-Mennonites!"] And so the year 1876 arrived. Br. A. Unger resigned from his office as elder. The congregation elected me for this position, which seemed very difficult for me."

§202 4. The Second Call to Br. August Liebig—the First General Conference (Annual Session).

a) On January 6, 1871, Brother Aron Lepp proposed that Br. August Liebig be asked to visit the church once again. This proposal was accepted, and Br. Liebig was prepared to come to Russia again. (The attitude of the authorities towards the Baptists had improved in the meantime; by an edict of March 27, 1879, the Baptists were numbered among the Protestant confessions.) In June, 1871, Liebig arrived with wife and child and lived for a year in Andreasfeld. "The church found itself in a distempered condition." One held to this view, the other to another view. Thus Minister Liebig had much work to do in order to bring individual tempers into a more relaxed and gentle condition. He spoke little, and kept himself above all partisanship, often sought solitude, and committed the contending brethren to the Lord that He might unite their hearts. He had not labored long when it became evident "that the Lord was with him and would grant him success, because He had given him wisdom." He did not pay respect to persons and in fact reprimanded most severely the faction which was closest to him. "He created much good will among us. Since that time church business meetings, and the Sunday School, have been conducted regularly according to his mode. He also introduced the prayer hour on Sunday morning."

b) The year drew to a close all too soon, and Br. Liebig had to return again to his work in Dobrudscha. The ministers in the church were on the way towards unity, and the church perceived that much good had come her way through Br. Liebig. The "itinerant preacher committee" was also created. Likewise, the relationship among the individual congregations (Molotschna, Einlage, Kuban and their affiliates) was clearly regulated, as were also their annual business meetings (annual sessions, General Conference) as a General Conference. Similarly, he brought method to the collection and administration of contributed monies, to the remuneration of itinerant preachers, and later to the convening of annual Bible courses which lasted one month, at that time

designated, rather presumptiously, as "missionary schools." The creation of these schools, intended primarily for ministers and ministerial candidates, was essentially his very valuable contribution, a work which produced permanent blessings. Later, when in 1875 he took up permanent residence in Russia and assumed the pastoral leadership of the congregation at Odessa (in both city and rural areas), he conducted these Bible courses year after year, and presided at the annual business sessions as well. According to Br. Unger's annual report for 1872 (original), the first annual business meeting of the M.B. General Conference convened on May 12, 1872, in Andreasfeld.

§203 Elder Liebig left the distinctly Mennonite confession of the M.B. Church untouched. May our ever-fond recollection of the Mennonite Brethren Church and the rich kindness of God, in this life and in eternity, be their reward in the case of both the worthy, now venerable, Bishop Liebig and his former teacher—who also extended pastoral assistance to us—the late J. G. Oncken, and also the late Karl Benzien. We are glad to be able to report that in North America as well, where Minister Liebig now lives, he enjoys a brotherly and "ministerial" relationship with those "very Mennonite" M.B. churches, as a director of "Bible schools" (courses) among them.

The Einlage Mennonite Brethren Church concluded the year 1872 with a membership of 180, apart from 61 members who actually belong to the Alliance Baptist Church of Tschornoglas.

XXVII.
THE M.B. CHURCH IN THE MOLOTSCHNA AND THE KUBAN FROM 1865/66 TO 1872/73: FROM THE "JUNE REFORM" TO THE FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE

1. *The Molotschna M.B. Church*

§204 a) We have seen how the Molotschna Church,[256] which was actually the mother church of the M.B. Church, overcame the excesses of the "over-joyous" and the "strong." And we have discovered how all the non-partisan believers and non-partisan, Christ-oriented members of the South-Russian Mennonite Brotherhood in the Molotschna District, foremost among them the ministers of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt Church and a few leaders from the recently-established "Temple Church" which had not as yet departed from the confessional foundations of ecumenical Christianity nor from the character of sound, evangelical Pietism, received her (the Mennonite Brethren Church) with affection, sympathy, and highest espectations in consequence of this, her victory. Many of

these good expectations were vindicated; and where, in this time of ours, were all hopes fulfilled?

b) Supervisory Council. We have already listed and characterized the men who came to the side of the physically ailing first minister Huebert, in 1865/66, to support and encourage him (cf. above *#184* and *#188*, "Growth in Sad Times," etc.). In the fall of 1865, Christian Schmidt and Jakob Jantz were already appointed as Huebert's assistant teacher and associate leader respectively. Johann J. Fast from Halbstadt, previously from Schoenau (passed away in Rueckenau), had previously been elected to the diaconate and, after Br. Jakob Jantz had moved to the Ekaterinoslav area as co-founder of the colony and of the Friedensfeld M.B. Church (45 versts from Nikopol) and Br. Christian Schmidt to the Kuban, Fast was named assistant minister and associate leader. Daniel Fast was Br. Huebert's "baptizer" and general assistant until he too moved to the Kuban about the same time (or somewhat earlier) that J. Jantz went to Ekaterinoslav. Br. Philipp Isaak, who held no spiritual title, was always and everywhere Huebert's co-worker, and he constantly remained an active member of the church. Everyone loved, sympathized with, and respected the quiet, tender, and deeply insightful elder. The stable character and sound Christian attitude of all these leading brethren who understood each other well, became the means, by God's grace, by which the Molotschna congregation was able to maintain itself in good order and by which it could experience rich spiritual growth after 1865/66 (when the "Hermann Peters Brethren" made the final break with the church). The M.B. Church in the Molotschna was strengthened significantly by the appointment of the relatively very young but very sincere Br. Abraham Schellenberg as assistant minister in the summer of 1869. Brother Johann J. Fast and Abraham Schellenberg remained with the church when Heinrich Huebert was finally able to fulfill the desire he had had for ten years to move to the Kuban (1873), where the church anxiously awaited him. Even before Elder Huebert left, Brother Johann Regehr [257] and Johann Poetker were also called to the ministry.

c) The growth of the church was not phenomenal, but it was steady. It may be of interest to many to know how many members were added to this church annually, after the departure of those who moved to the Kuban and of the "Hermann Peters Brethren," when the church's membership was approximately 100: from 1860 to the end of 1865, 299 people were baptized in the Molotschna, an average of about 50 each year; from 1866 to the end of 1872, 164 were baptized, averaging about 22 people a year. Specifically, the numbers baptized declined and increased in the following manner: 31, 19, 18, 15, 14, 23, 44. It is noteworthy that in these seven years the persecution and inner struggle had virtually ended, the yearly growth was less than half as much as

during the first six stormy years! [258] At the end of 1872 the membership of the Molotschna Church must have been around 150 to 200,[259] because many were moving elsewhere (e.g. Friedensfeld, Blumenau, etc.). Naturally the church was not without cases which required disciplinary action, some cases were of a grievous nature, others less so. These experiences were similar to those which have always prevailed everywhere since the episodes involving Ananias and Saphira, Simon the Sorcerer, Demas, etc., etc., as well as the incident described in I Cor. 5.

d) The nature of the church services at this time changed from the emphasis on personal edification, as in the evangelical-pietist tradition, to the evangelical-free-church emphasis on the preaching and worship service. The leaders of the church who were not used to this emphasis were clearly pressured in that direction by the membership. Just as the people were hungry for "order! order!" so they were hungry for lectures. The struggle between the Low German and High German dialect continued for a long time, but at the end of this period (1872) the organized sermon in High German predominated. As far as the style of preaching was concerned, Br. Christian Schmidt was the most popular man in the M.B. Church, just as Bernhard Harder was in the Mennonite Church—they were referred to as "our Wuests," or "our South-Russian Spurgeons." Besides the sermon, the private devotional emphasis remained in the M.B. Church. In many areas the Low German dialect remains to this day in the more confined evening services held in various villages, in the Bible studies, etc. Nevertheless, mutual sharing relative to the sermon was for too long a time forced into the background. Elder Huebert was and remained the strongest person in the various facets of ministry because of his depth of insight and the enthusiasm of his hope in the Kingdom of Grace.

e) A small "storm of persecution" arose at this time. We are referring to an attack by a government agent. It was caused by a lack of familiarity of the individual concerned with the situation. The event transpired as follows: In the spring of 1867 the Molotschna M.B. Church celebrated its first missions festival. Foreign missions had receded into the background during the periods of recession, organization and stuggle—indeed, they had almost fallen into disfavor. For some time, however, people had again become interested in foreign missions. This first foreign missions festival took place in Neu-Halbstadt in the roomy establishment of Br. J. J. Fast, who at that time operated a large lumber business in the village in addition to his ministry. Br. Abraham Unger and Br. Jakob Reimer (formerly from Gnadenfeld, died in Wiesenfeld) came to this occasion from the Einlage Church. Br. Unger gave the missions address and received high recognition from the brethren and outside visitors. Here a young man, J. F. from Tiege, requested baptism.

At the request of the Molotschna Church the baptism was performed by the above mentioned Jakob Reimer in the Molotschna River at Alt-Halbstadt. This was a novel event in this area. A large crowd of curious people from Prischib (Lutherans) witnessed the event. They reported this "disruptive" event to the inspector of the colonies who lived in Prischib. He had only recently been appointed and knew nothing concerning the whole issue pertaining to the M.B. Church, something that had long been clear to the higher authorities. Furthermore, the enraged father F.[260] complained to him. An exchange of letters now took place: we here present the last and most important of these documents, as well as the documents occasioned by this matter in the M.B. Church.

1) "To the Molotschna Area Administrative Office at Halbstadt. Statement of the undersigned church elders of the Molotschna Mennonite District.

"With reference to the request of the Area Administrative Office on May 4, sub No. 4020 to respond to three questions pertaining to the baptism of the Mennonite youth, J. F., by the minister of the seceders, Jakob Reimer, we are hereby honored to make the following explanations: 1) no one will deny that the report of the baptism was drawn to the attention of several of the Mennonite spiritual leaders; but only few remember that the name of the one who baptized and the one who was baptized were widely circulated; 2) that baptizing in a stream is not unscriptural can be seen from Acts 8:38, although the passage does not state whether baptism was performed by immersion or sprinkling. Because the baptism of J.F. was performed by an unordained elder, however, we cannot recognize it as scriptural, on the basis of the teaching of the apostle in Titus 1:5[261] [cf. above, *#15,* b]; 3) that this baptism under such circumstances has not been entered in the church records by any of the ordained spiritual leaders, is obvious from the above. Alexanderwohl, May 31, 1868. Wedel [Elder of the Alexanderwohl Church], Toews [Elder of the Lichtenau-Petershagen Church, succeeding Duerk Warkentin], Goerz [Franz, Elder of the Rudnerweide Church succeeding Ratzlaff who had already retired], Peters [Bernhard, Elder of the Morgenau-Schoensee Church, succeeding Heinrich Wiens after a long vacancy], Peters [Isaak, successor to Heinrich Toews, Pordenau, and still living in America], Thomsen, Rempel [the latter two ministers in Gnadenfeld, replacing the sickly Elder Lenzmann]." This document should be compared with *#108*f.

2) "The Halbstadt Area Administration to the Inspector of the colonies: In response to Your Honor's instructions of last October 23, No. 692, the Molotschna Area Administrative Office hereby most humbly reports to Your Honor in the enclosed submission that the administrative

office had made inquiry not only to individual religious leaders but to the Molotschna Mennonite Council of Church Leaders whether the baptism of F. performed by Reimer was in keeping with Scriptural precept and is duly recognized.

"But because the Molotschna Mennonite Colony is divided into a number of church parishes and each has its own particular church elder, the elders deliberated concerning this issue at a general conference. As is obvious, however, the church elders were not able to arrive at a general consensus; therefore six church elders [262] submitted an explanation the substance of which stated that the baptism had not been performed according to Scripture, whereas the church elder Johann Harder with five of his ministers maintained the opposite in another explanation. As was mentioned earlier, there is a council of church leaders in the Molotschna District, which is made up of representatives from the various churches, each of which is supervised by a particular church elder. The church elders are all of equal rank and their declarations are regarded equally before the law. Which of the two explanations was the right one or the one on which a final decision was to be based could not be determined [263] by this area administration because the issue was of a purely spiritual nature. Rather it could only state that a similar separatist church [264] had already been founded here earlier. Its elder had been confirmed by the church itself and also recognized by all other churches and also by the government. June [?], 1868. Administrator, Toews."

3) "Brief statement of the rules and regulations of our church. §205
[Submitted by Elder Heinrich Huebert in the above mentioned matter, representing the Molotschna M.B. Church., June, 1868.]

a) "On the occasion of an enquiry by the supreme government directed to the church elders of the Molotschna Mennonite District: 1. Whether the baptism of Johann F., performed by the Minister Jakob Reimer, has come to the attention of the Mennonite clergy? 2. Whether the baptism was registered in the church records and when? Whereupon certain church elders declared: 'We do not know.' Thus we find it necessary to use this occasion to openly publish the rules and external regulations of our church. How it is possible that these same elders [i.e. their predecessors] who, in 1860, believed they had sufficient evidence against us to warrant governmental prosecution, can answer the above quoted simple questions of the governmental enquiry with "We do not know"—we leave open for the consideration and verification of all concerned. During the severe treatment by the [Mennonite] authorities, our written explanations and defences were based on the Confession of Faith published by the Rudnerweide Church, and passed by the Odessa

censorship. Therefore, it has become public knowledge that we propagate no new teaching, but our teaching is based on one already in existence for 1800 years, that of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and His apostles and prophets. It is upon this that we wish to establish and organize our church; even fearing to add or take away from the book of prophecy, lest we should bring upon ourselves, in the first place, the plagues that are written therein, and in the second place, lose our part in the book of life and the holy city (Rev. 22:18-19). Since the rules and external regulations are included in the above-mentioned Confession of Faith, and all those desirous of knowledge can be convinced, we propose to publish herewith, only those points in which we differ from the rules and outward regulations presently in effect in the existing churches.

b) "1. In our assemblies and inspirational meetings, we have tried to follow the rule and order given in I Cor. 14, i.e., that one or two, or a maximum of three persons present their lectures, and that in succession. We recognize herein the loving purpose of the apostle: that the church be edified, the gifts stirred up, and the saints prepared for the work of the ministry, in order that the body of Christ may be built up, 'till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive' (Eph. 4:12-14).

"2. Regarding the receiving of new members, when persons come to us and desire church membership through baptism, we examine their testimony and Christian experience, how and when they came to a knowledge of sin so that they, according to I Peter 3:21, are able to make covenant of a good conscience with God. After they have given this public testimony before the church, other witnesses are called to confirm that, according to their human judgment, a genuine change of heart has taken place. Upon the confession that they believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, they are baptized, i.e., immersed in water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. This is to symbolize a burial. Even as the dear Savior took His many parables from nature and the natural life, in order to portray the Kingdom of Heaven, even so, baptism shall show the unbelievers what the person [baptismal candidate] believes: that is, that he has died to sin and the old life (Rom. 6:11). As in the natural life, the deceased is buried in the earth, so this portrayal of death shall be performed by a ceremony in the water (Rom. 6:3-4). Herein water becomes one of the three witnesses on earth (I John 5:8).

"3. The performance at the baptismal ceremony is the duty of the elder or deacon. However, as was the case in the house of Cornelius,

where Peter 'commanded them to be baptized' (Acts 10:48), it may also be performed by another, whom the church has designated.

"4. Likewise, at the communion service, the distributing of the bread and wine is the duty of the elder or deacon. Acts 2:46 states: 'And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house;' according to the teaching of the Apostle Paul in I Cor. 11:23-24, it is not absolutely necessary that ministers be present. Exceptions may be: in times of persecution, or in case of illness, where the patient has a great desire for communion, we could not consider it an offense if the person requested it from a believing brother, for it is sanctified through the Word of God and prayer. With respect to the partaking of the body and blood of Christ, it differs little from the righteousness of Christ, which we appropriate by faith, which is the focal point of the entire Gospel. Our Lord and Savior speaks in this regard (through Paul): As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. And as by eating, sin entered the world, so John 6:54 says: Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.

c) "In that we publish this for everyone's knowledge, we would add our heartfelt desire, that every reader who is thus inclined should reread the quoted references from the Holy Scriptures in order to convince himself of the truth. Above all, we would urge each and every one to consider how he might have peace and speedily save his soul. May none consider the matter as lightly as did Lot's sons-in-law, who laughed at his invitation to leave Sodom because the Lord was going to destroy the city, and thus perished in fire and brimstone (Gen. 19). According to all the signs which God's Word lists as preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ, the hour may be near, yes, very near, when the judgment prophesied in Rev. 17, 18 and 19 shall break with great fury upon this earth. Happy are those, who have then found their refuge in the wounds of Jesus—and even though their body may become the prey of death—the soul and spirit may attain unto their rest." [Cf. "Confession of Faith" 1900/1902, p. 4, line 5ff.]

d) The matter passed without any unpleasant consequences for anyone: for many more serious thunderclouds had threatened the M.B. Church before. The church continued to grow quietly in the Molotschna, very much in character with the quiet and above all else energetic and tough man who had been its first leader and shepherd, next to Christ the great shepherd. It is only that we have been reminded of the way things were by the just cited good document, through which the deceased is still speaking to us, completely in accordance with his spiritual thinking and feeling.

§206

2. *The M.B. Church in the Kuban*

This congregation has received ample attention under XXV, B, in the "Documentary Supplements." Consequently we have less to say about it during this period: the congregation learned to live under difficult conditions and work hard, to struggle with and to conquer over natural and spiritual difficulties, the natural difficulties being caused by the unfamiliar local conditions of nature and economics, and the spiritual difficulties by the spiritually ailing brethren who had come along from the Molotschna and Chortitza. We shall cite here the continuation of the "Brief Report,"[265] of the old Elder Daniel Fast (see above #180. . . . c) "In 1867 the brethren Johann Claassen, Benjamin Becker and Abraham Dyck[266] were ordered to appear at the Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt [more exactly to the inspector of the colonies in Prischib] to give an account with regard to some religious matters, of whose responsibilities, however, they were set free [after a brief interview between Claassen and the inspector. Cf. *#120*, the conclusion]. They returned on July 19th of the same year. d) In 1869 the Lord called Claassen's wife home after a prolonged illness.[267] In the same year, Br. Claassen was elected Area Administrator. In 1871 Claassen, in his capacity as Area Administrator and deputy, had to travel to the city of Vladikavkas for the reception of His Majesty, our Emperor Alexander II, whereupon in 1872 he was awarded a silver medal, which was followed by a second, a golden medal in 1874—both on the ribbon of the order—for distinguished administrative services in the colonies. [As a reward from the government he also received an engraved golden watch.] e) As far as the spiritual leadership is concerned, besides Minister Christian Schmidt, Br. Daniel Fast was also elected to the ministry on June 14, 1870, while Elder Huebert was still tied for certain reasons to his old home land. When it became possible, he visited us in 1868 and 1872 in the Kuban (that is twice), and in 1873 he settled in the Kuban and there assumed the leadership of the congregation. . . . f) The congregation as such continued to build upon the only firm foundation, Christ (I Cor. 3:11), of course not without struggles against enthusiastic ideas, especially against expressions of exuberance, for which purpose some representatives from the Molotschna and Chortitza areas had come along; also against so-called breakers of bread from the Volga, who according to Jesus Christ's example broke the ordinary bread for eating instead of cutting it [making a great spiritual issue of it; see above 'Hermann Peters.' These were former Lutheran 'brethren,' holding in the main to the opinion which they had received in the early '60s from the overly joyous from the Molotschna; they were called 'Jaeckelsbrueder' after their leader. Br. Peter Jaede of the Mennonite Brethren, with others, was one of them]. Through the grace of God the former came to naught already in the Molotschna among the sound brethren there, and

also found little enduring support here, so that when the emigration to America began, the representatives of both views also emigrated and from the New World asked for forgiveness, while others repented here. . . ." (See further ". . . till 1885".) The Mennonite Brethren Church in the Kuban had 100 to 150 members at the end of 1872.

XXVIII.
FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHRISTIAN ANABAPTIST MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH IN RUSSIA ON MAY 14-16, 1872

§207 The consultative meeting of the M.B. Conference churches represented, as we saw in the last chapter, a body of three congregations with over 600 brethren and sisters who had been baptized on their voluntary, trustworthy testimony of faith, the achievement of the first twelve years. Elder Unger relates the following about this conference in his report for 1872 of the Einlage congregation (Minutes not found):

"Dear Brethren in Christ! Wonderful are the ways of our great God, and He leads all to a glorious conclusion. Now that our Einlage congregation has been in existence for ten years and the Molotschna congregation for twelve years, despite coming through many conflicts from within and without, these congregations are being regulated and grounded more and more on the basis of the Word of God. In this the brethren from abroad such as Benzien, Oncken and especially A. Liebig have been very helpful, for which we should be thankful to God and the loving brethren. Thus the grace of God has succeeded in calling to life, in Andreasfeld, an annual conference of all our congregations: from Einlage, Molotschna and the Kuban. With joy we recall the lovely days of May 14, 15, and 16 of this year [1872], where many brethren from near and far met to discuss the affairs of the Kingdom of God. Seven brethren were selected to form a missions committee [more correctly: itinerant preaching committee], namely: from Einlage Abraham Unger, Johann Friesen; from Friedensfeld Bernhard Dyck; from Odessa Johann Wieler; from Halbstadt Johann Fast; from Pordenau Franz Janzen; from the Kuban Daniel Fast. Then five itinerant preachers were chosen, namely Eduard Leppke, Christian Schmidt, Johann Wieler, Aron Lepp and Daniel Fast. For the first two of these a salary of 400 rubles and for the last three 200 rubles was decided upon because the latter wished to pursue their earthly occupations in addition to proclaiming the Word. Then it was decided that each itinerant preacher should keep a diary which was to be sent quarterly to the secretary, Br. Johann Friesen in Einlage, on the basis of which the committee would prepare a quarterly newsletter and distribute the same according

to their discretion, to the churches, so that the congregations become aware of the labors of the brethren and that interest for missions be awakened more."

This concludes a very short but very significant chapter. We see that the first annual conference established a precedent for decades, for to this day the M.B. conference churches move virtually within the same paths. This involuntarily occasions the question: has today's itinerant ministry grown proportionally? Then we had three congregations with ca. 600 members, today twelve churches (12 elder circuits with ca. 50 fellowships observing communion and as many elders and leading ministers) and over 6000 members (in Russia). But we must consider the foreign missions in India, which is relatively large and demanding in personnel and money, as a balancing factor. In addition the individual congregations often engage in an unrecorded itinerant ministry (i.e. guest preaching) as has always been the Mennonite custom.

XXIX.
THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCHES IN RUSSIA FROM 1872/73 TO 1885: THAT IS, UNTIL THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

A. The Einlage M.B. Church 1872/73-1885

§208 1. During this period this church played a dominant role because of its energetic organizational work within the church itself as well as in the whole M.B. Conference, just as Molotschna had done previously.

§209 2. A Baptist as "Super-Mennonite" (essentially based on Heinrich Epp's account). After 1872 Br. Eduard Leppke,[268] a Baptist from Prussia, was active as itinerant minister in the M.B. Church [Br. Wilhelm Schulz, also a Baptist, likewise worked here as itinerant minister in 1873. In the region of the Don he ran into difficulty with the police and left the country. He was a foreigner]. Eduard Leppke "came to a different conviction" and no longer accepted the Baptist but rather the Mennonite doctrinal teaching—indeed, in such an extreme form, "that he erroneously taught that only nonresistant Christians can be saved"; in other words, only Mennonites. However, he frequently carried on a very blessed ministry by means of his winsome and attractive private talks. Nevertheless, because of his extreme teaching he came into conflict with the whole conference of the M.B. Church. In spite of this he continued ministering for a long time both in the Einlage as well as in the Molotschna congregations, "desiring to undo the work of Liebig."

§210 3. In addition to this Br. Abraham Unger resigned as elder in 1876 because of external pressures (of a financial nature, largely occasioned by

his book business in which he was engaged for Christian purposes, by his ceaseless labor for the church without remuneration, and by the boundless hospitality which he engaged in and which was taken advantage of by many). The eldership was transferred to Br. Aron Lepp by the church.

§211 4. "Because Br. Leppke had already done preparatory work, Br. Aron Lepp believed that the opportune moment had come to terminate the fellowship with the Baptists [see above *#201(2)*]. A church meeting was held in order to implement Leppke's position, but the Lord did not allow it. Now Leppke wrote disparaging letters regarding the church leaders. He wanted to be the influential voice and partially succeeded. The 'divisive spirit' again prevailed in the Einlage congregation. Attention was again drawn to the "questionable aspects of the Baptists," so that Br. Liebig was not even allowed to participate in the Lord's Supper on one occasion [while attending a conference as a visitor. In spite of this, he was invited to preach the communion sermon, but he resolutely declined]. The majority sided with . . . the brethren Leppke and Lepp; Brother Unger and a few other brethren came to stand alone. A general conference was held in the Molotschna in 1876 at which time this issue was also raised—supporting and opposing views were expressed. During the discussion, however, there was a 'silent chorus of prayer' among the brethren. Although no voice became audible, the brethren cried to the Lord that He might decide [Johann Friesen from Einlage, Johann Siemens from Andreasfeld, Johann Fast from Halbstadt-Rueckenau and others were involved]. Then Br. Johann Siemens, the influential minister from the Einlage congregation who otherwise had also frequently opposed Abraham Unger on many issues, arose and asked whether the conference would agree to postpone the issue for one year in order to determine what the Lord would say to them in the meantime." This was accepted by the session. And thus it remained; the issue was not raised again and therefore the policy remained in keeping with the decision that had been made on the recommendation of Br. Aron Lepp around 1870 in the Einlage congregation. Similarly, the concluding statements of the 1873 Confession of Faith, printed in 1876, stated that the M.B. Church and the Baptist Church were two separate fellowships, but enjoyed spiritual fellowship[269] and fellowship at the Lord's Supper. (Cf. *#201* and *#221*.)

§212 5. According to Heinrich Epp, the Einlage M.B. Church discussed issues pertaining to marriage at its meeting on December 27, 1879. The problem was "how to deal with those children who wanted to be married but who did not belong to any church. Should they be referred to the Mennonite Church" or should M.B. ministers be allowed to perform the

marriage vows? Many brethren felt these questions were too difficult to resolve. "Why should we be concerned about outsiders," some asked. "But they are our children and we must seek what is best for them!" "Let them go to the Mennonite Church." "But if they feel it is wrong, and they cannot join our church if they have not become Christians, what then?" Brother Abraham Unger now made a recommendation which then was accepted. The children of church members, who were not yet baptized and did not belong to any church, but who desired to be married, were to appear personally before the church and to sign a written statement promising to continue attending church and to live a quiet, morally upright, life. N.B.! Such persons thereby acknowledge that they are associated with a church whose teaching and practice they recognize to be truly Christian, but that they are not 'members' of the same until by faith and baptism they too become 'members' of the church. By this means many were prevented from a hypocritical acceptance of baptism in the Mennonite congregations of our general Mennonite brotherhood and, in most cases, a second baptism in their mother church, the M.B. Church. It is one thing if children of the Mennonite Church, who may not be true believers (although many are), come to church in simple pious reverence according to the manner of their parents; but it is quite another when persons who are definitely not eligible and who do not profess to be ready for baptism, still take the step of baptism with a guilty conscience and with dishonesty on their lips and ceremoniously make their confession on their knees before God and men! And this is what some M.B. members are pleading for today? As soon as baptism ceases to be a prerequisite for marriage in the Mennonite Church of our common confession, the believers and the leaders of that church will be absolved of their responsibility in marrying young men and women who are baptized without genuine faith, contrary to our common old-evangelical Anabaptist teaching, but whose life is outwardly pious and whose testimony appears trustworthy, even though no thorough investigation has been made.[270] But as long as baptism opens the door to marriage, the responsibility is cast on the leaders of the church and especially on the believers[271] in the church (see above *#137* and *241*).

§213 6. Confession of Faith of 1873/76

Early in 1873 an official from the Ministry (Colonel Bartholome) came to the Mennonites of South Russia. He had come to deal with a matter affecting the Mennonites as a whole, an issue relating to the new military law which was to be imposed in 1874. This official also visited the Einlage M.B. Church and desired to know what their relationship to the Baptists was. Therefore the elders and ministers of all the M.B. churches met and explained the differences between the M.B. Church,

the Baptists, and the Mennonite Church. When the particular draft had been examined by the whole gathered congregation [272] it was sent to the Ministry together with a particular Confession of Faith (a revision of the Hamburg Confession which was adapted to the Mennonite teaching). In 1875 the church decided to print the Confession together with some "Explanations." It was printed in 1876 by Spittler in Basel. But because the Confessions arrived from Basel precisely at the time when efforts were being made to separate from the Baptists, the additional note stating that they had fellowship with the Baptists was not favorably received by many brethren and they regarded it to be unnecessary (Epp). Even less acceptable was the language which described the relationship to the Mennonite Church. It is a blemish on the record of the church of that day and it is hard to imagine how the deceased Unger, who was so sensitive and moderate, could permit such a thing. (Compare sections *201, 211* and *221* as well as the Confession of 1900/1902, pp. 5 and 6.)

7. Attempts of an Administrative Nature to Link the Einlage M.B. Church to the Baptist Confession. (Substantially according to the Heinrich Epp.) §214

a) When the Baptists received recognition as a branch of Protestantism by an imperial decree on March 27, 1879 (codified as Articles 1106, 1107, 1108; Volume XI, Part I Collection of Laws of 1896), the government wanted to know how many Baptists there were and where they lived. Therefore an order from the government was received by the Chortitza Volost to report on this matter. Thereupon the seceded Mennonite brethren were all reckoned as Baptists. When the brethren Jakob Koslowsky, Abraham Unger, and Johann Friesen, who all lived in Einlage, became aware of this and inquired concerning the issue of the area administrator, he replied that they should submit a request to rectify the situation. Thereupon the Einlage congregation decided that Br. Abraham Unger and Br. Abraham Lepp were to investigate the matter. The brethren did their utmost. They reported from Ekaterinoslav that the authorities were demanding that the Confession of Faith be submitted in the Russian and the German languages. The completion of the translation into Russian was submitted to Br. Johann Wieler, who at that time was teacher at the Halbstadt Secondary School. He submitted the translation to P. M. Friesen, the teacher of the Russian language in this school, for revision. The brethren Unger, Lepp, Johann Siemens, and J. Wieler also worked with P. M. Friesen in Halbstadt to formulate new explanations concerning the relationship of the M.B. Church to the Mennonite Church and the Baptists, as well as a petition to the Ministry of the Interior (Epp). After these documents had been presented to the authorities, an order dated May 6, 1880, came to the Chortitza Volost

asking them to inform the authorized individuals[273] of the Einlage M.B. Church that their members would be recognized and treated as Mennonites by birth in the same way as members of the older Mennonite churches. Thereby the enemies of the church had again been humiliated and had not improved their image. "The Molotschna Mennonite officials had acted more wisely on this issue and had perceived the root of the issue more adequately" (Epp). (Cf. Confession of Faith 1900/1902, legal German-Russian Addendum, pp. 56, 57.)

b) Since we do not have access to the document from 1880, we will pass over a period of 16 years and quote a German translation of an identical document.[274]

§214(2) At the last moment, because of unexpected events concerning the M.B. Church in another province we are able to bring the following document in the original.

a) "The Ministry of the Interior of the Ekaterinoslav Provincial Government, Department I, Table 2, March 22, 1880, No. 1074. To the Ekaterinoslav District Police Office. In the process of gathering information concerning the number of Baptists in the Ekaterinoslav Province the Chortitza Volost administration included in the list of Baptists several persons who consider themselves to be Mennonites. As a result of complaints by church leaders about this report Minister Johann Siemens, deacons Peter Friesen, Gerhard Sawatzky and Peter Froese, Elder Aron Lepp and a member of the brotherhood, Abraham Unger, have presented printed copies of their confession of faith, the Hon. Governor of the Province requested on the 14th of January of this year under No. 126 an explanation from the Department of Religious Affairs concerning foreign confessions: 'Is it proper to recognize such persons as Baptists'? The Department of Religious Affairs upon examining of the aforesaid request of the Hon. Governor of the Province under No. 126 explained in a memorandum No. 936 on the 6th of March of this year that, since the above-mentioned persons, having presented a printed confession of faith in accordance with the teaching of the Mennonite Brethren Church, deny that they belong to the sect of Baptists,—he, therefore, does not find sufficient reason for the transferring of such persons against their will from one tolerated confession[275] to another one; at the same time he added that religious dissent of the above-mentioned persons from other Mennonites is irrelevant, because according to article 903, Code of Laws, vol. XI, part I Mennonites excercise matters of faith without obstruction according to their church affiliation and customs.

"About this the Provincial Government, informing the Police Office of it, orders that the above explanation be communicated to the

Chortitza Volost administration, and that the above-named persons be notified concerning their grievance of the 24th of September, 1879. Counsellor: Ascheberg. Clerk: Melnikov. Certified true copy: Mishchenko. No. 337. — 4./10. 1880.

"To the Chortitza Volost: The District Police Office in forwarding to the Volost Administration a copy of the enclosed order for information, directs you to announce the content to the persons named in it, have them sign for it, and forward their signatures to our Office. April 1, 1880. Police officer: N. For the Secretary: Mishchenko. No. 2700.[276]

"That the copy of instructions of the Ekaterinoslav Provincial Government of the 22nd of March, 1880, No. 1074 is correct with its copy as certified by the Chortitza Volost Office by signature and the affixing of the seal. September 17, 1885. No. 3434. For the Volost mayor, candidate Dueck. The Volost Secretary: Johann Epp. (Seal)."

b) "Copy from a copy. Certificate. The church leaders of the Einlage Mennonite Brethren congregaton, Ekaterinoslav Province certify by signature and affixing of the church seal that the printed 'Confession of Faith according to the teaching of the Mennonite Brethren Church' mentioned in the explanation of Foreign Confessions, Department of Religious Affairs, March 6, 1880, No. 936 was drawn up by the representatives of the Mennonite brotherhood of Molotchna, Berdiansk District, Taurida Province; Kuban, District of Batalpashin, Province of Kuban; Friedensfeld, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav as well as their affiliated congregations together with the representatives of the Einlage Mennonite Brethren congregation, and that these four churches with their affiliated branches represent from its very beginning one alliance and are identical in everything among themselves, although each one being independent in all matters of the church under the leadership of the respective elders, ministers and deacons, in accord with the church statutes and customs of the Mennonites. Village Andreasfeld, November 21, 1892. Church Elder: A. Lepp. Preacher: Johann Friesen. Deacon: Gerhard Sawatzky. Peter Froese. (Seal)"

The German translation of the new explanation of December 28, 1896, given above (pt. 7) refers back to the first of these documents. Both documents verified (March 6, 1880, and No. 21, 1892) by the notary in Gross-Tokmak, Province of Taurida, are in our possession, June 12, 1910, sub No. 1618 and 1619.

§215 8. Death of Brother Abraham Unger. Our dear "reporter," Br. H. Epp, tells the story in a simple and beautiful way (we use his account freely): As we understand it, much transpired both with respect to church members as well as with respect to church leaders. For all things

must work for good to those who are called according to purpose. And there is a time for everything, even for life and death. So it happened that Br. Abraham Unger became seriously ill with a chest infection on February 19, 1880; his end appeared to be near. The fellow believers visited him often. Even Br. Aron Lepp shared in the sorrow concerning his illness, although much had transpired between them and their love for each other had weakened, because each wanted to confirm his own point of view. In spite of this their last meeting was a very loving and solemn occasion. The nature of their last conversation is not known to the writer (Br. Epp) because it took place between the two alone.

Brother Unger's end came nearer and nearer. For a time it appeared that he might recover, and he himself believed he would recover, but the Lord had determined otherwise. Unger's last night had arrived. At 8 o'clock in the evening of March 11 he became aware that his end was near. A brother who had come from far stayed with Br. Unger that night and related that the night had not dragged. The seriously-ill brother desired to bid farewell to all his employees.[277] Abraham, his son, who was supervisor, asked all sixteen employees to enter, one at a time. In a few words he exhorted the first ones and he begged all of them to forgive him where he had failed, because he was about to die. Many employees wept, clasped and kissed his hands. Thereafter he bade farewell to his beloved family members who also entered individually, one after the other. . . . It was 11 o'clock at night. All his strength was now exhausted. He had spoken in full consciousness. The darkness of midnight also affected him—it became dark within him. It appeared that he was deprived of everything. He was confident that the Lord had accomplished the work of salvation, but he felt that he was unworthy and had done so little for the Lord; therefore he became restless. After he had spent an hour in such darkness, he summoned his daughter-in-law, Luise [278] to read the tenth chapter of the Gospel of John, where it is written: "No one shall pluck them out of my hand." She read it to him slowly. Thereupon he stated, "No one! Therefore I may also believe it!" He was comforted and remained thus to the end. At 9:00 o'clock in the morning of March 12, 1880, he passed from us at the age of sixty.

The funeral took place on March 16 in the village school at Einlage. It was filled to overflowing. Br. Johann Siemens from Andreasfeld preached the funeral sermon in which he sketched the life of the deceased. Out of deep affection for their father the children had written the following in gold letters at the foot of the coffin: "I have kept the faith, henceforth is reserved for me a crown of righteousness." The place where he was to be buried was already crowded with people before the funeral procession arrived. Many of those present wished to see him once more. His body had not deteriorated; he lay like a victor in the coffin. He

was also respected as a victor after his death, and many in the churches were of the opinion that the teaching for which Br. Unger had striven was the right one. Even our dear brother and elder, Aron Lepp, came to a different understanding before a huge congregation of approximately 1000 people. At the 25th anniversary on January 6, 1886, in Rueckenau in the Molotschna he freely confessed that he regretted much that had happened! We all make mistakes, but still we hope to enter the heavenly abode as victors on account of the reconciling and healing grace of God.

"And the ministers will shine as the brightness of the heavens and those who turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."[279]

With these words the chronicle of our dear narrator, Br. Henry Epp of Andreasfeld, closes. May this aged one richly experience the grace "to enter the heavenly abode as victor" through the power of Christ's blood at his death which is probably near at hand!

But in loving memory of all those who have fallen asleep in Christ and have labored in our churchly house, often with much anguish and tears, sometimes also in error and failure—we all make mistakes—and with an inner prayer of thanksgiving to the one from whom all good and perfect gifts come, the Father of Light, with whom there is no change or shadow of turning, who alone does not err or fail, we want to set the following precious words of the saintly hymn writer, Klopstock, as an epitaph to encourage us to fight boldly:

How comfortably rest all those
Who are blessed,
Who boldly fight the battle of life.
How comfortably they rest in the graves,
Until they are awakened as victors.

You, Reconciler with God
Also were lowered into the grave
When on the cross your work was accomplished
You were not committed to corruption,
But as a great victor you arose again.

Oh! When we shall also rest
With all the blessed,
Having survived the difficult battle of life,
Then you, Redeemer, will call us
Out of the graves to a feast of victory.

§216 9. The following were the Affiliated Groups (or Stations) of the Einlage M.B. Church to 1885:

1) Andreasfeld was the actual center of the church for a long time

(to 1903) because Elder Aron Lepp, the prominent Minister Johann Siemens and a number of other leading brethren lived there for many years. No special accounts of this church group are extant. The colony of Andreasfeld, in the District of Alexandrovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav, fifteen versts from Einlage, was established around 1870. Here the Einlage M.B. Church had its first house of worship in the same building as the school. Minister Liebig lived next to this meeting-house/church from June 1871 to 1872, and during the first decade and frequently thereafter, the annual conferences, if hosted by the Einlage congregation, took place here. The leasehold colony of Ebenfeld and the landowners of Blumenau also belonged to the affiliated church of Andreasfeld. The three places had their own schools and teachers, largely drawn from among their brethren.

2) Wiesenfeld was established by Br. Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld, after he left Blumenau [280] when the village was dissolved (actually after residing in the District of Alexandrovsk for 15 years: in Friedrichsfeld, near Andreasfeld, as a renter, and in Blumenau, also near Andreasfeld, as a landowner). Wiesenfeld was founded around 1880 by Reimer, in association with his sons, a son-in-law and the brethren Peter Friesen from Chortitza, Sawatsky, and others, in the Pavlograd District of the Province of Ekaterinoslav, 15 versts from the Sevastopol railway station of Saizevo. Here he continued his efforts, as he had earlier, but in a more quiet, withdrawn manner, to establish a milder, more sincere brotherhood alliance in the sense of a true alliance "where everything would revolve around the center: Christ." Here a brother would not be pushed and compelled on doctrinal questions until the Lord would reveal it to him also, much as in the best years of the Wuestian movement, there were more orderly and evangelical convictions in relationship to baptism, etc. This old Gnadenfeld and Wuestian brother, who did not find his ideals realized in the "secession" of 1860, did not find them entirely satisfied by the Christian norms of Liebig and Unger (because of their sharp corners, boundaries and certain narrowness), although he sincerely loved and esteemed these organizers of the M.B. Church. He softened the hardnesses and rounded the corners of strict Anabaptism as much as he could, largely through "being silent," which, according to Br. B. Becker's statement (Dec., 1864) "also preaches." (Cf. ##182 and 189, e). Here they also had or have their own school, with good leadership, whose classroom also served as the place of worship.

3) Jasykovo-Nikolaipol, Province and District of Ekaterinoslav (since the end of the 70s). Here the Einlage M.B. Church has its second meeting house. Active here as well as in the area of the entire Einlage Church and to a lesser degree in the entire church conference as ministers and itinerant preachers during this period (until 1885) were, first of all,

the brethren Dietrich Klassen (died in Friedensfeld) and Peter Peters, then Cornelius Fehr (now elder of the Kamenka Church in the Orenburg District) and Martin Koslowsky.

4) "Grossfuerstenland" or Sergeievka-Alexandertal, in the Melitopol District of the Province of Taurida, in the Mennonite leasehold villages on the property of Grand-Duke Michael Nikolaievitsch on the Dnieper, since 1875. This unit of the church consists primarily of brethren from the Chortitza, though partly also from the Molotschna District. During the period under discussion (until 1885) for longer or shorter periods, the ministering brethren Peter Fast, brother of Daniel Fast (cf. #51) who died at an advanced age in Petrovka-Naumenko, Province of Kharkov, around 1900, Jakob Wiens, Peter Wiens,[281] now in America, and (to this date, 1910) Jakob Janzen, Sergeievka were active. Special report not available.

5) Burwalde, in the area of the Chortitza Volost, not far from Einlage. We quote freely from the report of Brother Hildebrandt, written for the anniversary history of January 6, 1885. He characterizes the M.B. Church's manner of working and expanding[282] following the first period of storm and stress.

Some years ago, a number of conversions had taken place in some villages here in the Chortitza Colony. But nearly all of these moved out of the colony, with the exception of a number in Einlage, so that things looked "desolate in regard to spiritual matters." But the Lord did not abandon His work. In Burwalde, where no noticeable awakening had occurred to date, the Lord began to work in Johann Hildebrandt (the reporter) and his wife, through Hildebrandt's mother. (Thus it was not "completely desolate.") "Since I was so dead in unbelief, the Lord gave my wife an open ear, where the words of my mother found entrance, and she was converted on August 13, 1876." When Br. Hildebrandt, who was already repenting, saw that one can really believe that we can be saved, he prayed confidently to the Lord to give him true faith. "Thus I was converted one day later, on August 14, and we rejoiced together because we had both been converted. But it was not long before we began to look about to see whether there were others who would be one with us. We found none in the vicinity. When we came to the recognition that we should be baptized according to the Word of God and turned to the believers [in the M.B. Church], this aroused opposition in our parental home. My wife's father drove to our place and earnestly advised us not to be baptized. On my side of the family, the grandparents were against it, for I had been raised by my grandparents." But after six weeks, the Hildebrandts were "baptized and received into the body of Christ, though we were the only ones in our village. None of our members were to be found in the neighboring villages either, except for a few in Niederchortitza. But they were soon excommunicated, and so we were

completely alone." During the next spring, a couple was converted in the neighboring village of Rosengart. A year after the Hildebrandts' conversion, a revival occurred in Kronstal, also near Burwalde, and again several persons joined the M.B. Church, etc. "Now we began to conduct meetings in our area, for which we were really glad, though it was not without tumults. Once there was an attempt to disturb our evening meeting, but the village mayor prevented it. After that we had peace, until a time when itinerant preachers did house visitation in our village." Made restless by a certain man, the village mayor ordered the Mennonite village policeman to get the man out of the village. But because the policeman "was already awakened from sin," he denied the mayor's request. After that the brethren and sisters had peace, except for "scorn, disdain and ridicule." Thus the circle of believers in these villages expanded. At the end of 1884, 14 members of the M.B. Church lived in Burwalde, 14 in Kronstal; 9 had moved away, as had a few in Neu-Osterwick and Rosengart. The report is signed: Burwalde, Johann Hildebrandt.

6) Nepliuievo (a small group of Mennonite leasehold villages,[283] founded by families from the Chortitza District. This affiliated group was later included with Friedensfeld because it was closer to that center than to the Einlage Church). We quote freely from the report of Br. Gerhard Siemens, the present leading minister of Naumenko (Petrovka-Vassilievka), an affiliate of the Einlage Church in the Province of Kharkov.

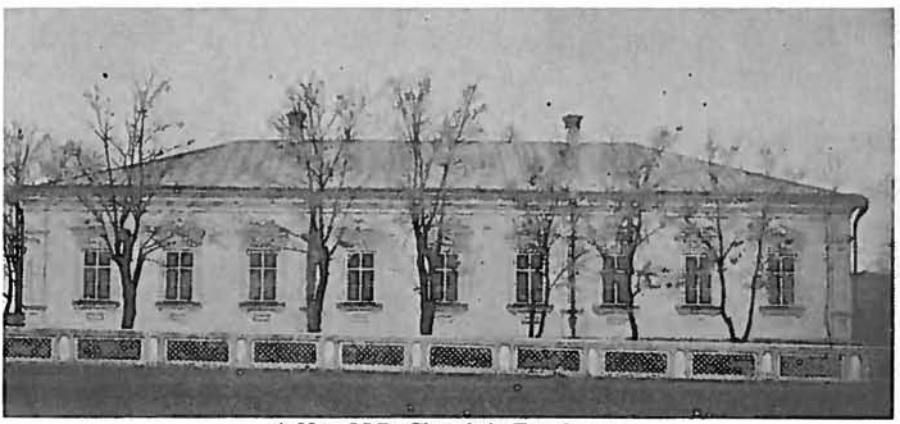
Br. Siemens was the first one in this area to be rescued from the bondage of sin. "This happened in June, 1877. Instrumental in my conversion was my brother, Johann S. (minister in Andreasfeld). Praise be to God! Immediately thereafter I became convinced about baptism and was promptly received into the fellowship at Einlage. Prompted by love, I at once sought to proclaim the salvation of Christ in my neighborhood. In my naivete I immediately went to the minister and believed that as soon as I would tell them the great secret, they would grasp it, as my wife had. How wrong I was! Even if many of our friends wept with us upon first hearing it, because they saw that by God's grace a great change had really occurred in me, a hatred toward me and the witness of Christ soon developed. But it pleased the Lord soon to add others. Namely there was a woman in our village who stated that her prayer had now been answered, for she had just prayed that the Lord would bring someone out of darkness, through whom she might perhaps find the light of life. She asked her husband whether they might fellowship with us, which they did. During the winter we were also visited by two brethren from our church [M.B. Church] Johann Siemens and Jakob Wiens. We requested the minister's permission to conduct a service in the school house. He referred me to the village mayor." The



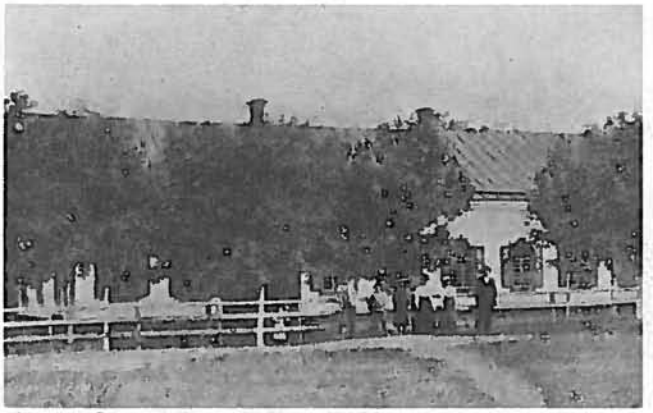
a) Church (and school) of the Einlage M.B. Church in Andreasfeld (First church building of the M.B. Church in Russia).



b) Old M.B. Church in Rueckenau.



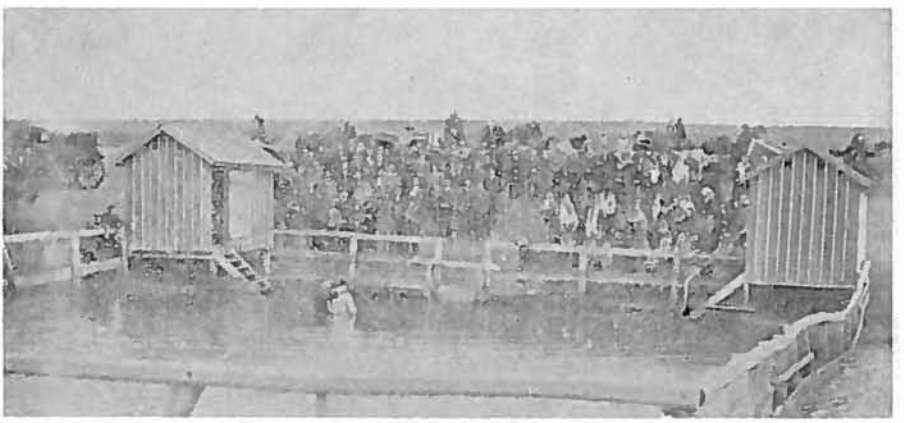
c) New M.B. Church in Rueckenau.



d) M.B. Church in Velikokniashesk ("Wohldemfuerst"), Kuban.



e) M.B. Church in Einlage.



f) Baptism at the M.B. Church in Rueckenau.

mayor gave permission. The service took place, and thereby the hatred was increased. In the evening there was an attempt to disperse the brethren who were assembled, and all the doors of the house where they were, were opened, but no one dared to cause a disturbance during the time of edification. "The following day the brethren [Siemens and Wiens] visited the minister, but they were thrown out by several neighbors." But this hatred only strengthened the determination of the awakened believers. In September, 1878, the couple mentioned above was baptized. The awakening also spread to the neighboring village of Steinau. (Br. Siemens lived in Blumenfeld.) Here he had to escape from one house to which he had been invited, "amid clubs, but the Lord stayed their hands." This took place in February of 1879, and in May, 1880, five converted souls from this village were baptized. Further awakenings, conversions and baptisms took place. In May, 1881, an itinerant minister who was visiting the brethren was taken to the state police official (*Stanovoi*), who released him without further ado. "Then our village of Blumenfeld made an effort, if possible, to force us out of the village;" but since that was impossible, the village congregation filed a complaint in court. The investigation, however, resulted in a decision in favor of the brethren, and the village administration was ordered to let the brethren conduct their meetings without disturbance; an attempt to make "Baptists" out of them also foundered. Meanwhile, the following incidents occurred: "We had assembled in our village, with Brother Christian Schmidt from the Kuban also in our midst. Just as he was beginning to speak about the Word: He came unto His own and His own received Him not, our enemies kicked open the door and forced us to disperse, and that very evening, our Brother Schmidt had to flee to another village. This happened in February, 1882. Later in the same month, we had assembled later one evening. Then the village administrators came with a considerable number of neighbors, and brought with them a man who possessed the power of Satan, to attack us. He took a brother from our midst and choked and tormented him as he took him to the mayor. Well, the Lord be praised that we were counted worthy to suffer a little." The animosity soon subsided, and thanks to the decision of the authorities, the brethren were allowed to practice their faith unmolested by the village administration and their neighbors. Late in 1884, there were 38 brethren and sisters in this settlement. The report is signed: Blumenfeld, October 29, 1884. Gerhard Siemens.

§217 10. Up to January 6, 1885, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Mennonite Brethren Church,[284] the Einlage Church (dating from March 1862) and its affiliated groups had received 704 persons through baptism, namely 202 during the first five years, from 1862 to 1866; 49 from 1867 to 1871; 184 from 1872 to 1884. The highest number was added

during the first year, 1862, with 116; the lowest—1874: 1. The second highest number was added in 1879, with 73, the second lowest in 1867: 2. Fifty-four were received into membership during the current year, 1885 (1886, the actual anniversary year for the Einlage Church, had 238, and the last half-decade, 1882-1886: 376). Its membership on the anniversary, January 6, 1885—must have been over 500 of the ca. 1800 in the entire conference.

B. *The Molotschna Mennonite Brethren Church, 1872/73 to 1885*

§218 1. During this period it was essentially the brethren Johann J. Fast and Abraham Schellenberg who had a formative influence on the church, and, for a time, Christian Schmidt,[285] Philipp Isaak, David Schellenberg and Johann Wieler as well. (Johann Wieler was a teacher in the secondary school at Halbstadt from 1879 to 1883, after which he served as an itinerant minister for several years with the "Petersburg Brethren," especially with Colonel Paschkov and the Russian evangelicals. He did this without the consent of the M.B. Conference. Later he went to Rumania, where he died in Bucharest in 1890.) Again we make free use of the reminiscences of Br. David Schellenberg and others. Elder Heinrich Huebert, who had lived in Blumenort a number of years, settled in the Kuban permanently in 1873. In his place Br. Abraham Schellenberg, who had become more and more active in teaching and leading since his call to the ministry in 1869, was elected to the position of associate elder.

§219 2a. The work of the church thus progressed under the blessing of God for the next six years. Abraham Schellenberg's faithful co-workers where Johann J. Fast, Johann Regehr (Klippenfeld), and Johann Poettker (Fuerstenau) as ministers, and Franz Janzen (Pordenau) and Cornelius Neufeld (Neukirch) as deacons, and Philipp Isaak. "During these years there were many difficulties, but also times of great blessings." In the autumn of 1875 Abraham Schellenberg was elected elder, and in the spring of 1876 Elder Huebert of the Kuban ordained him.

§220 2b. The land controversy between those owning little or no land and those having full or partial landholding rights occasioned a great deal of difficulty in the church. "Individual members have suffered in their spiritual life because of this. However, the effects of the controversy were finally overcome within the Mennonite Brethren Church through brotherly, loving admonition and public discussion" and, in the end, through the decision prohibiting any of the brethren anywhere from taking part in the controversy that was causing such deep turmoil in the

entire Mennonite community in the Molotschna. But the issue was committed to the hands of our sovereign Lord on the part of our church, and the difficulty within the Mennonite Brethren Church was overcome. (About 1890 the crisis had passed throughout the Molotschna area.)

§221 3. As we have seen, it was during this period that the question of the relationship of the Mennonite Brethren to the Baptists was raised. "This was occasioned by the beloved Baptist preacher, Br. August Liebig, for a time an itinerant minister, and actually the leading minister in Einlage, who had proved a great blessing by helping our churches in may ways." "He especially helped us to conduct our deliberations in an orderly manner." There were serious negotiations, especially at the annual general conference in May, 1876, in the Molotschna (see *#211*). "Finally the following resolution, that there be communion fellowship with the Baptists on a guest basis was agreed to." (More correctly, to adhere to the addendum to the *Confession of Faith* of 1873; compare *#201* and *#211.*)

§222 4. Another issue having to do with differences in the understanding of church doctrine arose because of the so-called "Holiness Movement," which was called into being through the influence of Pearsal Smith and the monthly publication, *The Christian's Pathway of Faith,*[286] which was distributed in Russia after 1874. "Some became quite enthusiastic about the movement, but when word came a short time later that Pearsal Smith had been obliged to withdraw from the public ministry for certain reasons, excessive enthusiasm about the matter disappeared, serving the cause only in the manner indicated by the Apostle Paul, Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good." Br. Philipp Isaak was especially interested in this issue. "The 'Holiness Movement' did not call forth any special corrective activity in the life of the church."

§223 5. a) In 1875, in late autumn, so-called general conferences were held at some places because believers of various factions had raised the question of how biblical unification could be brought about. The most well attended of these conferences was held at the Rueckenau Church. Br. Abraham Schellenberg was the leader and many of "our brethren" participated. Many "Abraham Peters Brethren"[287] with their leader, Abraham Peters of Friedensruh, as well as Minister Bernhard Harder with many of the brethren from the Mennonite Church attended on that occasion. Minister Richert and Geddert of Alexanderwohl, who were the prominent believing ministers of the Mennonite Church at that time, were not present. (They were already very busy with the question of emigration, if not already in America?). Many of the questions that

occupied people's minds at that time came up for discussion. For example, regarding prayer: (whether it should be) silent or audible, in what manner, whether sisters should be allowed to pray in the public services, and other concerns. The question of baptism also came up, and how intimate fellowship could be achieved. "Regarding the latter, our brethren tried, on the basis of God's Word, to prove that if we are walking according to God's revealed will and submitting unreservedly to His Word, we must practice baptism on faith in the Lord Jesus according to the example of the apostles. No proof to the contrary from God's Word was offered." "After lengthy discussion on the point, dear Brother Bernhard Harder arose and addressed his brethren from the Mennonite Church in the following manner: What do you think, my brothers, if we should feel that the Lord desires of us that we should be baptized in the river, would we not want to do it? On my part, I would be ready. How about you? It appeared as though it was not taken seriously. . . . Yet be that as it may, many of those present were convinced of the correctness of baptism on faith, and in the following year, 1876, 80 persons, including many who had attended this conference, were baptized."

b) In his travelogue of August 15-November 15, 1875 (cf. *#198*), Br. Abraham Unger writes about this conference as follows:

"We were invited to participate in a conjoint conference with the brethren from the Mennonite Church at Rueckenau on September 6. Several of us went. The fairly large church was filled to capacity with brethren. Many things were discussed and decisions reached. The chief concern was to meet and discuss things in love, and not to quarrel regarding different positions, because much hurt had already been inflicted thereby in God's kingdom. Various subjects were calmly discussed. Br. Abraham Schellenberg chaired the conference, and at the conclusion it was decided to hold a similar conference on the coming November 29. I cannot see any danger for our church in such an assembly, because on the path of love, truth must prevail, and God's Word is truth.

'Look out upon the springtime fields
Walk through the colored land of flowers:
Where in the garden or the woods
Is one leaf like another?
The rose bickers not with the aster,
Nor the oak with the beechwood:
For each one knows: we bloom and wilt
By the mellow light of one sun!'

A few pages later the dear deceased one quotes the following poem to chide religious intolerance in a mild way:

'Behold the folly of your friends
Exalted Head, with sympathy,
And build a church unto yourself
According to your masterplan!
There with raptured souls you keep
The great communion feast.
O do not let our foe be missing
At that great banquet hall in heaven!' " [288]

6. On October 2, 1876, the following brethren were elected to preach the Word of God: Franz Nickel, Wilhelm Loewen, Klaas Enns, Peter Siemens and David Schellenberg. Peter Siemens (see above XXV, footnote 16) never formally accepted his election to the ministry, although he did preach from time to time. David Schellenberg, twenty-four years old at the time of his election, had ministered with enthusiasm and under the blessing of God in the Sunday school for several years. He commented: "It [the election to the ministry] came very unexpectedly. I did not consider myself to possess the gift for it, but I could not decline."

7. The first unsuccessful attempt to build a church. "It was God's purpose to bless His little flock. But experience teaches us that times of blessing are preceded by times of testing. The purchase of a small farm in Ladekopp became a test of brotherly love." It was the strong desire of a number of brethren in Ladekopp that Christian Schmidt, the itinerant minister, should live there and that the church should have a meeting-place there. But as a place in which to meet, Ladekopp was far from central in the Molotschna Colony, and Br. Schmidt did not want to live in the isolated building provided, because he became the victim of thieves again and again. In addition, a marked decline in land prices was caused by large numbers emigrating from the Molotschna. This resulted in the loss of two thousand five hundred rubles to the church. This was not easy for the, as yet, small church, and the feeling of disssatisfaction was great, especially in the light of the absolute fruitlessness of the expense. The painful collections for the project took six years, beginning in 1873.

8. The Church Buildings in Rueckenau. a) When the undertaking in Ladekopp failed, a few brethren, particularly Philipp Isaak of Tiege, decided to buy a building privately for the same purpose in Rueckenau, which was much more centrally located in the Molotschna Colony; the §224

building was then to be remodelled and rented to the believers. This was in the year 1874. The building, now known as the "old meeting house," had been a tavern(!) for many years, a fact that had caused the ethically scrupulous people of the village much concern and offense. The village administrator at the time was Gerhard Epp, a serious and pious man, who soon thereafter became a faithful member of the M.B. Church. Precisely on the day that Abraham Schellenberg, Philipp Isaak, and Johann Friesen came to him to request his consent for the project, Epp had cried to God from the depths of his soul for counsel and help because of this village plague, the tavern. The coming of the brethren with their plan was for him an answer to prayer and an indication of God's working. Because of Epp's influence in the village community and the people's opposition to the tavern, the permission of the Rueckenau village council, allowing the establishment of a meeting house for the Mennonite Brethren in the Molotschna, though initially on a private basis, came through with unexpected ease. (The inhabitants of Rueckenau at that time were members of the Mennonite Church in Margenau.) So now the "tavern" was to be transformed into a "house of prayer." God blessed the undertaking. One partition after another had to be removed from the building which in those beginning years was considered a rather large one. Finally a wing was added for the church custodian, and the entire interior space was used for worship. In an ever increasing way the "old tavern," now the "new church," became filled with worshippers. Soon the congregation bought the building from the brethren, and everyone rejoiced that the Lord had given them a center for worship. At that time only the general assembly on the first Sunday of the month convened here. On the other Sundays and for the special festivals the meetings rotated from village to village wherever the "brethren" lived. This was done according to an "assembly list" that was set up each year. This is an old custom in the Molotschna, still practiced by the "Kleine Gemeinde."

b) "One could almost apply Acts 9:31 to the stance of the church at that time. The church . . . had peace and was built up; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit it was multiplied. When one reads letters written by leading brethren at the time, or observes the courage and tireless activity which the brethren generated, though their number as compared to the present number was small, one finds that the power of God was great in the church." "The attendance at meetings increased to the extent that the brethren had already decided in the autumn of 1882 to build a new church building in Rueckenau. [289] For this purpose a sum of money was immediately gathered and still more was pledged. The Lord gave the brethren courage and strength to proceed with the task. That same autumn some of the

preparations were begun. In the summer of 1883 the church was built under the supervision of Br. Johann Koop of Fuerstenau." (The interior dimensions were 84 x 42 x 14½ feet; unfortunately the ceiling was too low, something that had been predicted by many but without effect.) "On October 2 of the same year it was solemnly dedicated as a place of worship for God's glory and for the proclamation of the precious Gospel. Many attended the dedication service." The house of prayer, constructed from the most solid material, together with the barns [290] and a massive brick fence, was built at a cost of eight thousand five hundred rubles.[291] The cost would have been much greater if much of the labor, such as the transport of materials to the building site, had not been done gratis, and if the construction supervisor and the other brethren had not been so faithful in their punctuality and orderliness. When the building was dedicated, two-thirds of its cost had already been covered, many of the farmers who owned full-sized farms having donated two hundred rubles or more.

c) "In order to meet the total cost of the building, the congregation unanimously and with willing hearts agreed that each would give to the building fund according to the amount of farmland owned. Whoever had a full farm would give the proceeds of one dessiatine, the owner of a half-farm would give the proceeds of half a dessiatine, and the owner of a small farm, the proceeds of a quarter dessiatine. The money was to be given to Gerhard Epp, who was treasurer. Artisans or businessmen who were not landholders in turn paid a proportionate sum for this purpose. This has remained a custom to the present day. In this manner a number of churches have been built or remodelled in the Molotschna Colony with assistance from the treasury. In addition, subsidies have been given to build churches in the Memrik, Samara and Orenburg provinces."

§225 9. Emigration to America of Leaders and Members of the Mennonite Brethren Church in the Molotschna. (Cf. here the special section, "Non-resistance Issue and Emigration.") a) The time had come, according to David Schellenberg, for the Mennonites of Russia to make a decision concerning service to the state as an alternative to military service. The ensuing restlessness resulted in an emigration movement to America, despite the fact that Adjutant General (later Count) Totleben, sent by the Tsar in highest official capacity, attempted through personal intervention to dissuade the Mennonites from leaving. And so many of the members of the M.B. Church decided to leave the country, that had till then been their fatherland, in order to establish new homes across the seas. (It must be mentioned that the reports from the Einlage congregation do not make mention of this matter. Originally fewer members emigrated from there,[292]

and then none as significant for the life of the church as was the case in the Molotschna.) The pain of parting, both among those going and those remaining, was very great. Many brothers and sisters were especially sorry to see Elder Abraham Schellenberg emigrate. "However, he felt released from his responsibilities here. He attempted to set everything in order as best he could. He was convinced that God had given him another task. When he was asked to justify leaving the church, he intimated that among other things he was comforted by the fact that Br. Johann Regehr (Klippenfeld) and Br. Poettker (Fuerstenau), ministers of the Word, and Franz Janzen (Pordenau) and Cornelius Neufeld (Neukirch), deacons, and a third of the members of the church, were going with him." [293] To the author, Br. Abraham Schellenberg gave the following reasons for leaving: first, his concern, even conviction, that religious freedom would be taken from all alien church denominations, a view he later declared to have been in error; secondly, that he had "become too heavy a burden to his brethren in his capacity as a leader." The honorable and dear brother possesses a large measure of energy and ability to dominate. In America he had a similar experience. This he shared with the author in the Kuban area, where they met in 1886-1887 when Schellenberg returned from America for a visit eight years after emigrating. He admitted humbly and with joy that the blossoming of the M.B. Church, especially in Rueckenau, had exceeded all his expectations. He and others would rather be here and would have returned, if their homes, duties and interests had not been in America, and if they could have regained their Mennonite rights (which is impossible).

b) The regulating of the spiritual ministry by Abraham Schellenberg before his emigration. Under the leadership of Abraham Schellenberg, a council of brethren met in Rueckenau on December 27, 1878. Br. Johann J. Fast, who had previously lived in Schoenau and Halbstadt and died in Rueckenau, was named leading elder. Br. Jacob Dirksen (Muensterberg) became his assistant (died in Herzenberg). The latter soon left the Molotschna. Fast had laid hands on Elder Huebert for God's blessing in 1868 on behalf of the church. Br. Huebert himself had ordained Br. Fast as minister of the Word in 1867. "Brother Fast has always been a faithful fellow elder, especially in house visitation and the counseling of individuals. He has been a blessing to many in these respects. It is still often mentioned that Br. Fast is held in loving memory for having spoken appropriately and truthfully to one and the other. Proverbs 10:7 is fulfilled in him: 'The memory of the righteous is a blessing.' " [294] On April 15 of the same year the two brethren, Franz Nickel and David Schellenberg, were confirmed in the preaching ministry by the laying on of hands. The brethren Wilhelm Loewen and Klaas

Enns, who had not been prepared to accept ordination earlier, were confirmed in the ministry by Johann Fast, the leading elder after the departure of Abraham Schellenberg on June 1, 1880.

c) "And so the time came for the brothers and sisters emigrating to America to bid farewell. The farewell was arranged for May 6, 1879, in Rueckenau. Br. Jakob Dirksen (Muensterberg) spoke on John 16:32, 33, Br. Johann Poettker (Fuerstenau) on Revelation 2:10 (sic!), [295] Elder Abraham Schellenberg on the text, 'Because I live, you shall live also' (John 14:19), and Br. Klaas Enns among other texts used the verse, 'It must be so' (Matthew 26:54). Thereupon a number of brethren and sisters, who were emigrating, shared what was on their hearts. Finally all those emigrating were asked if it was their intention to remain true to the Lord, whereupon all stood to their feet to affirm their resolve to do so. Brother Abraham Schellenberg then asked the brothers and sisters remaining concerning their intention, and they also affirmed the same by standing." On May 15, 1879, final goodbyes were said to the emigrants at the Michailovka (now Prischib) railway station. Addresses were given and prayers were spoken out in the open field by those departing and those remaining.

10. The orphaned church and its united leadership. §226

a) "We felt like nestlings abandoned by their mother and now on their own, for the direction of the church and our task in the Kingdom of God here in the Molotschna were very much upon our hearts. But we did all things together [at that time, and such united action brought blessing].Each one served with the gift he had received (I Peter 4:10) and One was our Master, Christ. The meetings were faithfully attended and the brethren ministered diligently. We received rich comfort from God's Word through study and proclamation. The brethren Dirksen, Nickel, Loewen, Enns, and myself (David Schellenberg), together with our dear Brother Fast, were rather active in the preaching ministry of the church." Because Jakob Dirksen, minister, and Johann Kliewer, deacon, soon moved from Muensterberg to Herzenberg, Br. Johann Huebert of Blumstein, Br. Johann Koop of Pordenau, Br. Heinrich Loewen of Alexanderkron and later Br. Peter Boese of Tiegenhagen were elected to serve as deacons or as overseers for the poor. At this time (1879) Br. Johann Wieler, frequently mentioned above, came to Halbstadt to teach in the secondary school. He helped diligently in the preaching of the Word. It was during this period, 1882-1883, that the large church in Rueckenau was built.

b) By the year 1881 the work in the church had become so manifold that a strong desire developed to elect an elder from among the leading brethren. The election took place on April 14 in the presence of Br. Johann

Wieler, who was especially concerned that Brother David Schellenberg be elected. The brethren proceeded with the election in an atmosphere of prayer and supplication. David Schellenberg received one hundred and twelve of one hundred and thirty votes. He was ordained Sunday, May 23, 1882, by Elder Aron Lepp of Andreasfeld in conjunction with the large and memorable[296] annual general conference of the M.B. Church. (Compare #96 "The Office of Elder in the Mennonite Brethren Church.") The work of the church continued in customary fashion, assisted by the faithful support and counsel of fellow Elder Johann Fast and other well-known leading brethren.

§227 11. The years 1884 and 1885 were particularly significant for the Mennonite Brethren Church in Rueckenau. At this time revivals occurred in Waldheim and Margenau in the Molotschna, and in Spat in the Crimea. In 1884 eighty-four members joined the church; in the following year, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the M.B. Church in the Molotschna, one hundred and seventy-one joined, the largest number to join since the founding of the church. (This included the members who had joined in the Crimea, who at that time constituted part of the Molotschna body.) Among those received into membership in 1884 were several men widely known for their successful and outstanding evangelistic ministry as ministers in the Mennonite congregations within our South Russian Mennonite brotherhood. They were David Duerksen, at that time school teacher and minister in the Margenau Church, and presently elder of the Spat Church in the Crimea, Jakob Reimer, formerly teacher in Ladekopp and Muntau, and for some time already a "voluntary" evangelist in the Mennonite Church, until called to the preaching ministry in the Ohrloff Church. Both brethren were known and esteemed in the Molotschna as outstanding pedagogues. The third was Br. Peter Bergmann of Ladekopp, who was a gifted and promising preacher in the Halbstadt-Ohrloff Church. All three continued their preaching ministry in the M.B. Church without interruption. "On January 31, 1884, a brotherhood meeting accorded P.M. Friesen [then the head teacher of the Halbstadt Pedagogical Secondary School] the right to preach the Word whenever and wherever the Spirit might lead." (Schellenberg.) Several other brethren were appointed as candidates for the preaching ministry in the same year. Brother Heinrich Koehn (Pordenau) was ordained August 4, 1885, and Brother Isaak Fast[297] and Brother Jakob Doerksen on September 8, 1885, in the Memrik settlement. David Duerksen, Jakob Reimer and Peter Bergmann were given public recognition as preachers of the Word.

§228 12. The Question of Communion. Can believers, who, according to the teaching of the M.B. Church, have not received a biblical baptism, be

admitted to the Lord's Supper? (For the first time after many years, evidently since 1862-1863) this issue was raised in a brotherhood council session in January, 1882, and again later at a meeting of the entire brotherhood in response to questions from the Molotschna and, as it seemed, the entire Mennonite Brethren brotherhood. The issue came to a head because of a visit made to St. Petersburg by the Brethren Johann Wieler and P.M. Friesen on behalf of the Church. In St. Petersburg there was lively discussion of the issue among the believers (Paschkovzy). Few brethren were favorably inclined toward the issue. The church decided to refer the question to the M.B. General Conference which was to convene in Rueckenau that year. In May, the matter was brought before the annual session. "The question was tabled for further deliberation and consideration." P.M. Friesen informed the Molotschna brotherhood session as well as the general conference, that should the Lord so lead, he would no longer allow himself to be bound in the matter. Johann Wieler took a similar stance. All three bodies, the Brotherhood Council in the Molotschna Mennonite Brethren Church and the annual meeting of the General Conference took note of P. M. Friesen's declaration without placing a prohibition upon him. Since that time he has practiced open communion at appropriate occasions, but without being impatient or wanting to cause offense. (This was written in 1903; cf. #136 and #198.) The question led to major deliberations and resolutions of great seriousness only after 1885 and especially after 1900.

§229 13. The Affiliated Groups of the Molotschna Mennonite Brethren Church. These were established through resettlement of members of the church, revivals and acceptance of new members. With the exception of the Kuban, the first resettlement of members took place into the areas of Mariopol and the Don River. Then Blumenau was established by members from the Molotschna, but affiliated with the Einlage Church. Friedensfeld was established in the Province of Ekaterinoslav, as well as Sagradovka in Kherson, with "brethren" participating. Blumenau, which counted as an affiliate of the Einlage Church, has been described above, but special reports follow on the churches of Don-Mariopol and Friedensfeld-Sagradovka, which became independent before January 6, 1885. Thus we note:

1) The affiliated group of Puchtin, presently reckoned as Gniden-Blumenfeld, in the Alexandrov District of the Province of Ekaterinoslav, formed by several land-owning families from the Molotschna Colony. We know nothing of this group and its origin, other than that it is often mentioned in the reports of itinerant preachers who visited the Mariopol Plan and stayed with these members and conducted meetings.

2) The affiliate in the Crimea was established by Br. Andreas Voth

(cf. document of organization and the voters' list in the election of preachers, 1860) and some other members sometime after the 60s. We refer to the further report on the M.B. Church in Spat in the Crimea which follows.

3) The affiliate of Herzenberg, now Alexandrovka, in the vicinity of the district capital and railway station of Pavlograd in the Province of Ekaterinoslav, was established around 1880. Among others, the founders included the influential, active Br. Jakob Dirksen of Muensterberg, a minister and for lengthy periods an outstanding itinerant preacher in the Molotschna Church and the entire Mennonite Brethren conference, and Johann Kliewer, a deacon by God's grace, a pious and earnest Christian and an active member in the intimate church fellowship as well as the conference, and a model in his secular vocation (first as the owner of a flourishing wagon factory and then as a farmer).

§230 14. Until January 6, 1885, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Molotschna M.B. Church, 1074 entries are listed in their baptismal records (not counting most of the entries at the Don, with Mariopol, those since 1864 at the Kuban, and for some time in Friedensfeld and Sagradovka). Counted by half-decades, those received into membership were as follows: 1860-1864: 260; 1865-1869: 127; 1870-1874: 178; 1875-1879: 190; 1880-1884: 319. We see that here, as in the Einlage Church, the first and the last five years of the first quarter century produced the greatest growth. The following year, 1885, the anniversary year, produced the greatest number of new members in any one year: 171. The years 1860/61 (baptism became a matter of the church only in 1861) recorded 107. The lowest numbers were recorded in the years 1869 and 1870: with 15 and 14 respectively. The weakest of the half-decades was the second: 1865-1869. The membership of the Molotschna Mennonite Brethren Church, in the narrower sense of the two areas: Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld, after the many small resettlements and the larger emigration to America, was around 400; including the small affiliated groups of Puchtin, Crimea and Herzenberg, it was around 500 of the total of ca. 1800 members of the entire M.B. conference. After the emigration to America, there were about 200 members left at the Molotschna.

C. *The Kuban M.B. Church from 1873 to 1885*

§231 1. We interrupted our narrative of this church in the year 1873, at that point when Elder Heinrich Huebert settled there permanently and the reverberations of fanaticism of the period before 1866 had been overcome. Because of Elder Huebert's failing health, Brother Daniel Fast was elected

elder. On May 5, 1877, he was ordained by Huebert and inducted into the office of elder.

§232 2. a) The death of Johann Claassen. For many years Brother Johann Claassen had been the authorized agent and representative of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Since 1869 he had been Area Administrator. In the early 70s he was decorated for distinguished service as colonizer and administrator.[298] Following this period, Claassen's health began to fail rapidly. Earlier, Claassen had moved from Ovetschka to the lower Kuban Valley, and had lived in immediate proximity to the river, a very unhealthy location. It was also isolated from the two neighboring villages, which made the medical care of the brother very difficult. So his faithful, intimate brother, Deacon Abram Peters of Ladekopp, now already deceased, brought him to the village of Wohldemfuerst. Graciously he, together with his dear (second wife), cared for him. Claassen died in the Lord on December 27, 1876, at the age of 56. He was born in Prussia in Ohrlofferfelde, near Tiegenhof, and had immigrated as a child with his widowed mother, Helen, nee Penner, from the *Roten Bude*. (She was the second wife of David Claassen of Ohrlofferfelde.) Johann Claassen remained steadfast in the faith of his loving Savior, whose gracious fellowship he experienced intimately until the time of his death.

b) Our appraisal of Claassen's significance, which emerges clearly from his letters and other documents, can be seen in the following letter.[299] "Sevastopol, January 11, 1901. My dear and esteemed brother and father in Christ, Abram Peters! Peace and grace as a greeting for the new century. May Jesus, the unchanging Jesus, and His free grace, through which we all receive life and salvation, life and holiness, remain great in your life, and may He become ever greater in the evening of your life; may He carry you in the maternal arms of His love during the remainder of your earthly pilgrimage, and may He prepare and protect all of us for life in the Father's house! I received your letter and have sent it to the brothers Kroeker, the editors of the *Kalender*, with the explanation that I know you as one of our oldest and most revered members, and that I consider your objections with the highest regard. I knew nothing about the article in the *Kalender* before it was published. (Only now have I looked through the article in its entirety.) Kroeker is to be blamed only to the extent of having thrown a shadow upon Claassen without also making reference to positive aspects of the matter. One cannot deny the negative side of Claassen—he did promote emotional fanaticism for a time in a manner I still cannot understand. I have all the hundreds of letters and numerous other articles and I believe I know him even better than you do. You could never rise to more independent criticism of him because you loved him so dearly and love him still.

Because you were so deeply impressed by his personality, you could never allow yourself an objective judgment of him. That is the impression I gather from all your interesting and instructive accounts. That Claassen could go along with Kappes against Wuest, is something that can never be forgiven a historical figure like him (God and the brother can forgive him, but not the historian), just as David's sin and Hezekiah's folly, Luther's flirtation with the princes, Menno's cowardice in the face of the fanatics, the so-called 'harsh Banners,' and the lengthy blindness of the distinguished Wuest concerning the nature of that same Kappes, cannot be forgiven). But as surely as David, Hezekiah, Luther and Menno belong among the greatest of the world's men, so surely Claassen belongs among the greatest of men in Russian Mennonite society, and for the Mennonite Brethren Church he is no less a figure than is Zinzendorf for the revived Brethren Church of the Bohemian-Moravians. Claassen is a much greater man than you make him out to be. I say that, convinced that I know him best in all his weaknesses, but also in the totality of his intellectual stature, that is, through the gigantic literary legacy (gigantic for a farmer, even though very intelligent), in the way he borders on the childish and the exalted in a biblical kind of open-heartedness, even when that open-heartedness turns out to his disadvantage (for the status of his person). It is my conviction that the greatest men in our society (if one may speak of greatness in our microscopic Mennonite world) are Johann Cornies,[300] Johann Claassen and Bernhard Harder. Cornies' achievement embraces Mennonite agriculture and education, Harder's achievement the present Mennonite pulpit, and Claassen's achievement—our Brethren Church, which I, despite all the criticism which I have directed at it from time to time (and which I do not retract), consider to be the salvation of Mennonitism in its purely Christian significance and its final purpose.[301] There were better-educated men, more gifted men, men of greater personality, men who at first glance were more impressive than the two latter ones, but there was no one who had this insight in such depth and breadth, who had this commitment to a concept, and, what is most important—who left such large footprints for us to follow. After Claassen the important man in our M.B. Church is Abraham Unger, who was so differently disposed with respect to outside movements. He is very much like Claassen in his sacrificial dedication to an ideal, even to the point of self-destruction. That, in my view, is the most precious monument to these men. That is the result of my (by that time) fifteen years of delving into the past of our Russian Mennonitism. But the brothers Kroeker (whose work I so much appreciate) could not know all this about Brother Johann Claassen. I entreat you to deposit this letter in the archives of the Kuban Church, just in case I am not able to publish a biography of Claassen in the context of a history of the M.B.

Church. I heartily greet you and all those who love our Lord Jesus and His Kingdom of grace and truth, and remain yours in ever constant respectful love for you and your spiritual kin and fellow workers, P.M. Friesen."

§233 3. A view of the state and development in the Kuban area can be derived from the reports of two itinerant preachers of this period (before Daniel Fast's ministry as elder and after Johann Claassen's death). The abridged reports are those of Abraham Unger, 1875, and Christian Schmidt, 1876. We here abridge without use of quotation marks.

a) Brother Abraham Unger writes: "On October 23, 1875, I began the journey [by train] of nine hundred versts to the Kuban Church together with Brother Jacob Reimer of Blumenau and Brother Heinrich Huebert of the Kuban. We arrived at Alexanderfeld on Sunday, October 26. We visited Br. Peter Berg and then went to church. We remained there ten days, during which time we made twenty-three house visitations and preached in six services. I made a special effort to visit all the Old Colonists in their homes, which I considered my duty. But I visited many others as well. I found what I had known in part earlier, namely, that many of our people had joined the Friends of Jerusalem. This happened through the influence of Heinrich Neufeld [see above XXI, May 7, 1867, and Lepp's corrections, *#201(2)*] and the mad Johann Friesen from Gnadenheim at the time they delivered the entire church to the Devil,[302] with the result that the church was scattered, as when a hawk descends upon little chicks. Mad foolishness! The Friends of Jerusalem exploited this time of confusion to win many of our people for their movement. But that was not the worst of it, for we know that there are many honest individuals among them. Unfortunately many of them had strayed so far from God that they no longer considered music and dance to be sinful. Some have become sober again and want to return to the church. The brethren H. Huebert and Daniel Fast take pains to lead the church according to the teaching of the apostles and of Jesus Christ. This is difficult because confidence in one another has been weakened greatly by the dissension. But this may change little by little, if only more of the erring ones find the right pathway and return to the church. The brothers Jaeckel, Peter Gaede and Heinrich Neufeld with their consorts are a special group, and therefore cannot have fellowship with the others because they consider themselves holier. It is my conviction that a large part of this sentiment is pride and self-righteousness. They are very critical of the mistakes of others but not of their own. We also had a church business session, at which time it was decided to discuss the nature of missions in my presence. It was raining hard, and so only a few brethren had gathered. However, I hope that the meeting was not without value. As far as the economic conditions of the dear folk are

concerned, there is still much poverty, but compared with the situation some 5 to 6 years ago, we can speak of wealth now. Fine, big orchards have been planted. The soil seems suitable only for orchards [303] but the caterpillars are already beginning to destroy the fruit trees. While we were driving to Brother and Sister Cornelius Reimer in Ovetschka, the skies were sunny and we could see the Caucasian Mountain range with its jagged, snow-covered ridge very clearly. The highest peak, however, was the 18,000-foot Mount Elbrus. The hills and valleys were clearly visible on its slopes. Mount Elbrus is estimated to be three hundred versts from the Kuban. Brother Cornelius Reimer has planted an orchard on the Ovetschka of about 8 to 10 dessiatines in size, with good fruit trees and all arranged according to a fine system. For house and orchard he has received offers up to five thousand rubles. Only weak attempts at grain cultivation have been made because the soil, in many places, is not suitable. [304] However, the raising of cattle and sheep is more widespread. If, for example, a family has one hundred sheep, it can just get by. The building style, in the case of most inhabitants, resembles somewhat that of the Russians; however, a good number of German-style homes with barns have been erected as well. Brother Heinrich Nickel has a well-situated water-mill on the Kuban River, which generates considerable income. Brother Johann Claassen has also established a farm on the Kuban River, where he owns one hundred and twenty dessiatines [two large farms]. Our brethren have gained the goodwill of the government, which could be a blessing for them and their descendants, if they do not also decide to emigrate to America. [Cf. special sections, 'Non-resistance Issue' and 'Emigration.'] With few exceptions, the men here grow full beards. [305] The mountain people have much greater confidence in a man with a beard than for someone without a beard. The Area Administrative Office is in Wohldemfuerst, and the area administrator at present is Jakob Giesbrecht. At the same time he is elder of the Friends of Jerusalem. [When Hoffmann's rationalistic 'Circular' appeared, he left the Templers and again joined the M.B. Church, of which he had been a member since the earliest years of its existence.] I took part in the washing of feet, which was carried out very meticulously according to the Word, but it is my feeling that the spirit of intimacy and affection was lacking. Br. Jakob Reimer made many house visitations, led the Sunday school, and preached. There are numerous German estate owners in this area, and the railway is just beginning to raise the economic level of the community. Trade and commerce are becoming more active. May God grant that the life in Christ may also become more vital!"

b) Christian Schmidt reports in 1876: "We (Christian Schmidt and Jakob Wiens) left for the Kuban on October 3. We arrived Thursday,

October 7. After a four-year absence I saw the area and the inhabitants once again with whom we had experienced and endured so much. Many changes have taken place during this time. Numerous families have emigrated to America and others have died. The visible changes were not exceptional, except that the fruit trees had become large and various houses had been newly-built. Trees grow extraordinarily well in the Kuban area. The brothers and sisters have harvested and sold much fruit this year, for which the railway provides a good market outlet. However, the emigration mood has inhibited and hindered much activity, such as planting and construction. The promotion of agriculture is weak. Cattle and especially sheep provide the main income [weak harvest, but much fodder; disease among the cattle]. The welcome was warm and seeing one another again proved a joy. Thursday evening provided an occasion for spiritual edification in the school house in Alexanderfeld. The school room was crowded. Young and old had come together. I visited Br. Huebert and found him quite vigorous for one at his advanced age. They live quite comfortably in a house beside an orchard. I also visited Johann Claassen and found him still ill in bed. He had suffered much and was still very weak. After a few days he already attempted to get out of the house. He drove to the upper village, where thanksgiving was being celebrated. [He died two months later!] It was quite relaxed—first a time of edification, then a fellowship meal. At the close of the service I preached a sermon. I spoke to several brethren about giving to missions. Everywhere I found a willingness to contribute. What is needed is a person who will take the task in hand and lead. On November 1, I left the Kuban."

§234 4. In 1877-1878 the colony constructed a fairly large church and school under one roof. It was also to be used as secondary school. The intermediate school was founded by a "school society" under the energetic and enthusiastic leadership of Br. Abram Peters of Ladekopp. The school was maintained several years, until it was combined with the colonial school in Wohldemfuerst (Velikokniashesk) in 1881 to become an elementary school. It began with two classes, then had provided three and finally five classes. In 1878 David Claassen, second son of Johann Claassen, became teacher in the secondary school. He was a graduate of the secondary school in Halbstadt. (Until January 1, 1904, he was principal of the colonial school in Wohldemfuerst.) [306] After the schools were combined, the entire building was used as a church by the Mennonite Brethren congregation. Alexanderfeld (Alexandrodar) also has its own colonial school—at first with one, then two (since 1904) and three, and now four classrooms.

§234(2) 5. During this time the spiritual direction of the church was carried

on by Elder Heinrich Huebert (retired since 1877), Daniel Fast, and Christian Schmidt, minister and associate elder. He had returned in 1878 (died in 1906). Also sharing in the leadership was Abram Peters, senior deacon and member of the council. The council, under the leadership of the elders, consisted of ministers and deacons, among others the brethren Jakob Giesbrecht, Gerhard Isaak and Peter Dyck. Up to the end of this period the church continued to be weak. The ugly sectarianism had ended, but the emigration movement to America beginning in 1874 and the departure of a small group to Turkestan removed from the church not only the burdensome fanatics, but also a number of the best members and families. The Friends of Jerusalem, the majority of whom had formerly been some of the more intelligent brethren, were unsparing and excessive in their criticism of the shortcomings and of the evangelical but sometimes very one-sided pietism of the church. The pietism of the time could be described as a mixture of Wuestianism, parochial sentiment, and rigorous Baptistic bias. It was a pietism that was evangelical in teaching, and yet in relationship with churches from which one differed in thinking, intolerant, and in relation to social and educational improvement, culturally timid. Brother Schmidt was sound of spirit and enthusiastic about his objectives, neither vacillating nor tiring. But as a theologian and apologist, he was not always as wise as he was zealous, nor as meek as he was frank. The young people became stagnant, and the older people were not alert. The younger intellectuals (one can actually speak of intelligence in these villages) were more and more inclined toward the "Templers" and "Friends of Jerusalem" who had forsaken the Christian confession of faith as we comprehend it. For the latter the right understanding of Christian faith was related to promoting intellectual and progressive elements as a part of religion. For them the M.B. Church and obscurantism were more or less identical. In addition there was a group of religiously bankrupt people who in the years of storm and stress had either been excommunicated or had withdrawn from the church. Some of these had remained within the church context and become burdensome as foreign objects. These presented their ideal of the church again and again and complained about unjust treatment—"then and then by so and so." They justified themselves, made demands and scolded. (During the 1880s and 1890s most of these became Adventists, to the benefit of the M.B. Church. We are not saying that all Adventists are unsound in spiritual and ethical perspective. Especially do we think more highly of those who have been part of that body since childhood days. A few erroneous religious concepts do not necessarily have a lethal effect on the ethical dynamic of biblical teaching in the case of honest members. Nor do we say of any honest Adventist that he is not saved, as they say of us. But certainly the author would rather fellowship with a believing, tolerant Lutheran

Christian than with a believing Adventist, because the latter makes his salvation dependent on subordinate doctrines.) Elder Huebert was old and very weary and Elder Fast bore the burden with heavy sighing and prayer. Many of the faithful stood with him and made their lament to God. The Kuban Church was especially blessed with vital and pious praying sisters. Here the fire of the Holy of Holies was never extinguished. Day and night, one could undoubtedly say, there was always a "priest in the holy place, watching before the Lord," even though it was a priestess according to the New Testament pattern: "There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). And He heard their supplications. Help did come. The account of that will be presented in our final summary.

N.B.! The Kuban M.B. Church had about 150 members on January 6, 1885, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the church.

D. *The Mennonite Brethren Church in Friedensfeld and Tiege-Sagradovka to 1885*

§235 1. a) The following survey of the Friedensfeld M.B. Church up to January 6, 1885, the church's twenty-fifth anniversary, is a report written by the now deceased Deacon Bernhard Dyck on behalf of the congregation. (We quote freely with supplementary comments.): In the autumn of 1867 several brethren from the Molotschna, in the Province of Ekaterinoslav, bought two thousand dessiatines of land for settlement forty-five versts from Nikopol on the Dnieper. These were members of the so-called "Kleine Gemeinde." Three families belonging to the M.B. Church, the Jakob Jantzes (Fuerstenau), Bernhard Dycks (Schoenau), and Peter (brother of Daniel) Fast agreed, in the spirit of trust in the Lord, to settle on the land along with the others. In the early summer of 1866 they moved to their new destination and, together with the others, founded the village of Friedensfeld (now called "Miropol"). Among the settlers were several families who felt a close kinship with the "Brethren." Every Sunday and Wednesday prayer meetings were held in the "semlianka" (earthen hut), with a part below and a part above the ground, of the Jantzes. The Lord blessed the Word preached by Brother Jantz to the extent that two young women were baptized in the autumn of the first year. Because more room was needed, the congregation transferred to the home of the Bernhard Dycks in the fall of 1868. In 1869, five individuals were baptized and four members (two families) moved from the Einlage Church, so that there were seventeen members by the end of 1869. Brother Jakob Jantz was, as is known, the minister of the small group, Br. Peter Fast assisted him in the preaching ministry, and Br. Bernhard Dyck was appointed deacon. For six years Br. Peter Fast was also the school teacher. The membership grew as

several families of the dissolving "Kleine Gemeinde" joined. Some of those already baptized in the "Jakob Wiebe Church," also joined (cf. above, IX, "Kleine Gemeinde") the church at Friedensfeld. The little congregation had to endure many difficult battles. Friedensfeld did not live up to its lovely name; tragic disputes and hostility caused by purely external issues and questions of honor shook the life of the church to its foundations. Close relatives and members regarded each other in a most hostile manner. The church council was drawn into the strife to its great harm. It appeared that events would take a course similar to the happenings at Blumenau. It is not a Sunday's work to establish a "colony of brothers." If God does not grant special grace through strong men who do not vacillate, then the "Meadow of Flowers" (Blumenau) becomes an "Acre of Thorns," and the "Field of Peace" (Friedensfeld) becomes a "Battlefield." Yet the Lord could help, but not without chastisement. Strong, rich members went out of the church, and God made those "poor and small" who had been mighty and wealthy, so that he might test them and save them. So this church also experienced the fulfillment of the promise of the Savior that "the powers of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Later the church was greatly strengthened and encouraged through the ministers Christian Schmidt and Johann Wieler, who for a time settled in Friedensfeld. Johann Wieler conducted a private school. The church grew, and it was felt that Friedensfeld, until then an out-station of the Molotschna Church, needed to achieve independence. Many families belonging to the "Kleine Gemeinde" emigrated to America. Members of the M.B. Church, mostly from other points, came to take their place. By the grace of God the affiliate Friedensfeld, with 45 members and 125 adherents, was organized on June 15, 1875, and became the M.B. Church of Friedensfeld. Jakob Jantz was elected elder and Christian Schmidt became associate elder. The elders Abraham Unger of Einlage and Abraham Schellenberg of the Molotschna ordained them. [307] In the fall of 1875 Peter Fast, the teacher, moved to Sergeievka and in 1878 Christian Schmidt moved to the Kuban. Since there was a need for ministers in the church, the congregation elected Benjamin Jantz and Johann Neufeld to the preaching ministry. After four years they were confirmed as preachers and Bernhard Dyck as deacon by Elder Aron Lepp. In February, 1883, the Minister Christian Schmidt of the Kuban visited the church in Friedensfeld. After his departure a great revival, which engulfed nearly every heart, broke out in the village. Prayer meetings took place every evening and there was much weeping and praying for grace. Soon some broke into tears of thanksgiving and praised God for the blessed peace of God. In April and May, 40 of these were baptized, mostly children of the members. Six were considered Baptists, because they were not of Mennonite background.

b) On January 6, 1885, the church had one hundred members (not counting Sagradovka). There were two hundred and fifty adherents of Mennonite background. They lived in Friedensfeld and the immediate vicinity. In addition, twenty-four members of the Baptist Church in Michailovka, formerly known as Sacharin and Tschornoglas, were under the supervision and care of the Friedensfeld M.B. Church. (The elder of the Baptist Church, or his representative, is invited to help with difficult cases of church discipline, especially in the event of eventual excommunication.) The M.B. Church of Sagradovka was closely tied to the Friedensfeld Church through the ministry of Elder Jacob Jantz.

2. a) The church in Tiege-Sagradovka sends a report dated November, 1884, through Brother Jakob Richert (quoted freely): In 1871-1872 a new colony was established in the Province and District of Kherson. This tract of land had been purchased by the Molotschna Mennonites (Gnadenfeld and Halbstadt) from Count Katschubei for the landless. The settlers came from various areas: Molotschna, Crimea, Puchtin. Many other settlers had formerly belonged to the Molotschna, but now lived on the estates of large landowners. In 1872 six villages were established (later there were 16). Among the settlers there were three Mennonite Brethren families. "But it was more difficult for us than we had thought, because we were young in the faith and needed much spiritual care. It seemed as though we were orphans, but the Lord Jesus, to Whom we had entrusted ourselves, kept His promise: 'I will not leave you desolate' (John 14:18). Although we three families do not live in the same village, we looked forward with joy to Sundays, when we could come together and edify one another through the Word of God. Our desire and prayer was, not to be an offense to the name of the Lord and His Kingdom. Rather we wanted to have a part in building the Kingdom." In the same year two more couples moved into the area, increasing the number of members. "In joy and pain and many trials the Lord kept them." But not all of them remained faithful. The Lord took one soul to Himself through death, "and Satan succeeded in leading four souls astray. A man with the name of K.D. was used of Satan in an attempt to establish a counter-church." He and a certain A.H. baptized one another and then several others. He then received some individuals who had withdrawn from the small M.B. Church into his church by laying hands on them. "This man had come to our services formerly, seeking a position as preacher, either in the M.B. Church or the Mennonite Church. When he could not achieve this, he started to establish his own church. The brethren admonished him not to do it, but he insisted on carrying out his intention. In just one year the church of twelve members had scattered. Most of them had been baptized in the "Hermann Peters Church" which was located there. Finally K.D. also §235(2)

joined by being baptized again. But he went astray once more and remained alone until the time of his death.

b) "Because of the severe trials right at the outset and because we were young in the faith, and because the mother church was far away, it seemed difficult to establish a church in this desert on the foundation of the teaching of the Lord Jesus and His apostles. But the Lord does not abandon His church. He has answered our prayers." Br. Peter Fast of Friendensfeld was the first one to visit them. The following year, in May, 1873, Jakob Jantz, also of Friedensfeld, and Br. Eduard Leppke, went there to conduct the election of teachers of the Word. "That is how I, who considered myself very unqualified and still do, was named to be leader of the small flock. To the world we were a thorn in the flesh, and among us were diverse opinions, which situation required much effort and labor. But to God be the glory for preserving His inheritance until now. Although we did many foolish things through ignorance, He did not withdraw His grace from us, but rather heard our prayers and gave us more brothers and sisters."

c) Sunday services were conducted in private homes from village to village according to the old Molotschna custom. Often strangers who wanted to attend did not because they knew that often there was not sufficient room. "The church was deeply grieved about this situation because there was a deep desire that many might attend. They felt responsible to invite people to come, but that was impossible now. For this reason the desire grew ever stronger to own a meetinghouse, where not only the brothers and sisters, but also guests, could attend the services." But although the need was evident, it appeared that it could not be met because the necessary financial means to buy or construct such a building were not available. Nevertheless, the congregation finally decided to venture forth, and in the fall of 1881, at a church business meeting, it decided, in the spirit of trust in God, to secure a loan in order to purchase or erect a building. It seemed the most suitable location for this purpose was Altonau,[308] because of the nearby Inguletz River. Soon after this a farmer in Altonau decided to sell his farm. The church saw this to be God's leading and bought the property. The house was remodeled and transformed into a large meeting house. In June, 1882, the dedication of the building, together with a love feast and baptism, took place. "The joy of celebration was especially enhanced by the visit of the beloved Elder Jakob Jantz of Friedensfeld and the beloved Elder Christian Fischer of Blumenfeld. Hearts are filled with gratitude even now as the congregation thinks of the blessed hours of that day, when God blessed His own in such rich measure. We believe that God also blessed the many guests who came, which eternity will reveal. Much thanksgiving ascended to God, and the united prayer was

that God might build His Kingdom. In His grace He has heard that prayer." "May God grant that we may not be disappointed in our expectations, but that many may be added to the church as the redeemed of the Lord. God be praised eternally! Jakob Richert, Reinfeld, November 1884."

d) The membership of the M.B. Church in Sagradovka on January 6, 1885, exceeded one hundred. There were about two hundred and fifty adherents. One hundred and thirty six souls had been baptized since the founding of the congregation. So for this period the Friedensfeld-Sagradovka M.B. Church had about two hundred members, or five hundred when all adherents are counted.

E. *The Mennonite Brethren Church in Mariopol ("on the Plan") and in the Don River Area ("on the Don River Side") up to 1885 (1887)*

§236 This church reports through its minister and elder representative, Br. Eduard Woelk, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the M.B. Church, January 6, 1885 (we abridge and supplement freely):

This is the report of the origin and growth of the M.B. Church on the Don River Side. a) Around 1850 numerous persons experienced a revival in several villages of the Grunau Colony. (The Colony is in the Grunau Colonist territory in the District of Mariopol, or, as it is known, "on the Plan," in the Province of Ekaterinoslav. It was founded by Lutherans and Catholics.) They assembled occasionally, spoke to one another about the Kingdom of God, and edified one another. A Wuerttemberg pastor by the name of Wuest (Neu-Hoffnung), who was a believer, visited the Lutheran pastor in Grunau and preached from time to time. A great revival occurred. In a number of villages numerous individuals gathered for fellowship, prayer and the study of the Scriptures. However, because more and more people were becoming believers, persecution set in. On one day ninety people were penalized by having to do forced labor for the church community. Also, they were subjected to very strong pressure to declare, by signature, that they "would remain in their faith." Most signed because they feared the governing authority, but a small remnant did not. The consequence was dissension, and many returned to their old ways.

b) "After this many fell prey to the false freedom movement (see above XII: 'Wuest,' Kappes), but some feared the Lord had based their faith on the Word of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. In secret they edified one another. To some it became clear that it was not right to partake of communion with unbelievers. They did not know how to go about withdrawing from the church, however. Many thought it was sin to

secede from the congregation, and so they all remained in the church."

c) "About 1866, Johann Fitz [309] and Schroeder experienced an awakening. On occasion there was talk about baptism [309] on confession of faith. These two brethren reached a decision and were baptized by the brethren in the Molotschna. After this the brethren Preiss and Lietke were also baptized on their confession of faith. Thus the church consisted of several members, and those not baptized would have no fellowship with them.

d) "After this there was a movement to the 'Don River Side' [territory of the Don Cossacks], and the brethren Preiss and Schroeder met with the brethren Regehr and Bartel of the old Molotschna M.B. Church. They were of one mind, edified one another and based their fellowship on the Word of God. Those who were baptized on confession of faith soon met with Br. Abraham Cornelsen. The group became unified in naming him their leader. [Cornelsen had authored and signed the founding charter of the M.B. Church in the Molotschna on January 6, 1860.]

e) "During this time many of the old Mennonite Church brethren experienced new life. Among these were the brethren Johann Foth, Karl Foth and Berchthold. When they were baptized in keeping with their newly found faith, it became the occasion for a new movement among the Mennonite Church brethren and many others. Many said: This is no good; it is the kingdom of anti-Christ, and statements of that sort. But they searched the Scriptures more and more, received insight and were baptized on the confession of faith. Then, in 1875, Br. Leppke came there as an itinerant minister (cf. above *#208*, etc.). A number became believers through his messages and were baptized. The number of those baptized finally reached more than two hundred. And though there was mild persecution from time to time, the Word of the Lord proved victorious.

f) "At that time emigration to America began. Brother Leppke and a number of others also left. When, in 1883, Br. Cornelsen and Br. Johann Foth departed as well, Br. Eduard Woelk became the leader.

g) "The congregation on the Don River Side is scattered far and wide since the villages and 'estates' are small. Around 1885 the brethren Bechthold and Dombrowsky ministered in this area. The brethren Lietke and Koslowsky ministered in the Mariopol area and in the Bilachvesch Colony, each in his respective vicinity. The number of believers [members] in all of these localities is about three hundred. It should be mentioned that we were often strengthened through the ministry of the brethren from the Molotschna and Einlage. Reichenfeld, August 20, 1884, Eduard Woelk."

N.B.! Nearly all of the members on the Don River Side were of

Lutheran and some of Catholic background.[310] This caused legal and administrative difficulties, so that the church on the Don River Side was not able to identify with the brotherhood of Mennonite persuasion. Even the General Conference of the M.B. Church could not help in this matter. In 1887, subsequent to events recorded here, the church on the Don River Side joined the Baptist Union under the eldership of H. Lietke. It was then known as the Bilachvesch Church in the Mariopol District. The Kleinliebental Church in the Donskaia District also joined under W. Bechthold's eldership. This occurred on the basis of the law of 1879. Unfortunately this union did not develop with the kind of objectivity and cordiality that could and should have been present. Both the Mennonites, who did the releasing, and the Baptists, who did the receiving, did not do their best to achieve impartial and general knowledge of the situation, nor did they exercise the greatest mutual respect and brotherly love. A regrettable estrangement developed in the relationship between the two newly established Baptist churches and the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren churches. This, however, was gradually replaced by a loving fellowship as sister churches. All those members in the churches of the Don River and Mariopol areas that did not want to become Baptists emigrated to America.

The baptismal register of the churches of the Don and Mariopol lists five hundred and thirty-eight names up to the end of 1886. In 1885 the church listed about three hundred members.

F. *The Mennonite Brethren Church on the Volga: "Hahnsau" and "Popovka"*

§237 This congregation or these congregations were mainly a result of the visits of the brethren Benjamin Becker, Heinrich Bartel and Otto Forchhammer around the year 1860. We know very little about it with the exception of the fact that its early period of existence was very stormy. At the annual convention in May, 1874, in Andreasfeld it was accepted as the M.B. Church of "Hahnsau" (a Mennonite Colony in the Koeppental Volost, District Novo-Useni, Province Samara) and "Popovka" (a Lutheran colony). These congregations were represented by the brethren Eckert (born Mennonite), Hahnhart, Borchdorf, Gruen and Stehle. The brethren Eckert and Hahnhart probably were the leaders. Brother Borchdorf was appointed as itinerant minister with a salary of 300 rubles and a vehicle for transportation. With special emphasis, they declared the Mennonite Confession of Faith to be their own. The "sister kiss" was tabled by the Volga delegates. These brothers under the leadership of Eckert and Hahnhart have migrated almost entirely to America because (since they were not born Mennonites) they, like the brethren from Mariopol and the Don, could not receive the Mennonite privileges of exemtpion from military

service. Those, of these three areas, who remained have joined the Baptist Union as the churches of "Usti-Kubalinka" and "Strassburg" (in the provinces Saratov and Samara). At the present time there are at best very few Mennonite Brethren in the "homeland" of Brother Eckert and even before the 25th anniversary in 1885 the Volga M.B. congregations had ceased to exist.

XXX.
THE ACTIVITY OF THE M.B. GENERAL CONFERENCE AS A BODY 1872-1885

§238 The Mennonite Brethren General Conference consisted of all the M.B. congregations as initiated at the first joint meeting on May 14th in Andreasfeld. This Conference met in annual meetings which took place in the month of May alternately in various churches. The most important item on the agenda was the project of itinerant ministry with its treasury, reports, etc. (Cf. *#202.*)

A. 1) Annual meetings were of special significance because they dealt with important questions of principle. Thus in 1876 the question of fellowship with the Baptists, the emigration to America, the fellowship in communion with those who had not been baptized according to the biblical teaching of the M.B. Church were considered. In 1882 discussions centered on whether, for internal and external reasons, a working relationship with those of the Russian evangelical Baptist persuasion was possible, a question, which, in spite of the fact that Br. Johann Wieler had independently invited them to the meeting of 1882 at Rueckenau and had stormily requested the same at the meeting in Friedensfeld, 1883, was decided negatively after being energetically opposed by elders of the church. (Cf. *#141,* "Answers," May 7, footnote, etc.) 2) The conference or the annual meeting did not have (*de jure*) the character of a legislative authority, but was rather an advising, guiding, admonishing, and supporting institution. The total decisions of this conference came into effect for individual congregations only by approval at their regular brotherhood meetings. (See further *#241* (2) and Confession of Faith 1902, p. 33). In fact, however, the decisions of the conference were accepted almost without exception by every church, and the confidence of the churches in the annual conference was almost limitless, something that was natural since every congregation sent its most trusted men to the annual meeting—its elders, ministers and other proven brethren; through these representatives such a close bond of fellowship[311] was created between all the districts of various elders and other divisions that all the congregations of the M.B. Conference became conscious of such a solid unity as was not the case with the congregations of the Mennonite Church in Russia. The

peculiarities of Flemish and Frisian (although one hardly knows the term anymore) between Mennonites from the Molotschna, Chortitza, Volga, Ohrloff, Gnadenfeld and Lichtenau, although they are united into one "General Conference," were always felt more or less. However, at times more, at times less, knowledge, power, weakness, light and darkness could be found in the various congregations of the M.B. Church. d) The chairmanship of the annual meetings was held for an uninterrupted period of at least five years by Br. August Liebig who was invited for each of the conventions. 4) The income was quite substantial for the membership at that time: in 1874 with a membership of 800-900 an income of 2778 rubles, with expenses of 2225 rubles for the itinerant ministry.

B. In learning to know the character of the itinerant ministers and their activity, the nature of the spiritual life of the congregations in their power and weakness, their congenial and antipathetic characteristics, their diaries and reports can assist us. We have referred to the first "diary" by Christian Schmidt and Jakob Jantz in #196. Some parts of the reports of A. Unger and Christian Schmidt of 1875 and 1876 have also already been quoted. We cite writings of:

1. Brother Jakob Dirksen [312] of Muensterberg (Herzenberg) who for years together with Christian Schmidt represented the most intelligent and the most eloquent of his ministerial associates. We have to emphasize that, almost without exception, the itinerant ministers in their written reports underestimate their personal effectiveness, their penetrating eloquence in their sermons and their general activity. They were not men of the pen, and the Mennonite fears every exaggeration and every diffuseness of the written word. This fact is applicable to the vast majority of the reports, accounts, recollections, etc. of Mennonite Brethren. The Mennonite is the taciturn, reserved "Boer" with the exception of the fact that he does not fire guns or cannons; Boer and Mennonite also have the same ancestry, predominantly Dutch.

a) Brother Dirksen reported on the first and second quarter of the conference year of 1876-77:

"That was, indeed, your essence
Since days of yore
That you selected the quintessence
Of the weak, the frail, the poor;
That your work you have completed
With broken staff or rod;
With flighted vine defeated
The foe—upon him trod."

"If the truth of this saying were not confirmed many times over even in our own days, and the Word of God would not point frequently to the fact that it is not we who speak and act, but that God would like to work through us, it would not be possible for me to accept an assignment such as the Conference has given to me. But because it is this way, especially also in our community, experience has corroborated the words of Paul in I Cor. 1:21, so I too have dared, even though not without inner conflict, in God's name to follow the call given to me.

"Because during the first quarter year of my service from May 1 to August 1 the harvest and the threshing were completed, I can report little of the itinerant ministry during this time, with the exception that I have attended almost all of the congregational meetings in our colony [volosts of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld] and have taken part according to need in lectures for the edification of those gathered. Besides this, I, together with Br. Johann Regier [Klippenfeld], have made only a small itineracy here in our colony. After having experienced a blessed meeting in Tiege at Brother and Sister Philipp Isaak, I travelled in the company of the Klippenfeld brethren and sisters to Rueckenau where we first visited Brother and Sister Hamm. Here we shared our experience that our life on earth is a battle and that we enter the Kingdom of God through much tribulation. Then we went to Brother and Sister Johann Friesens and from there continued to our friends Brother and Sister Gerhard Martens where we together led an evening Bible study. The subject of our study was Luke 19, the story of Zacchaeus and his efforts to see Jesus, his climbing up and down the sycamore tree and the blessed results which followed. The application of these truths to ourselves seemed to be well received by those present. In conclusion there was much heartfelt praying. Monday the 17th we first travelled to Klippenfeld, and then on to Sparrau to Brother and Sister Schroeder. These told us how they rejoiced at having entered into fellowship with the Lord and His people. One continually experiences that in obedience there is blessedness and in rebellion, pain and an absence of peace. We first visited the Abram Wienses, now already believers; we recalled many a precious promise from the Word of God and prayed together. Then we visited the Dietrich Loewens, also already believers, who, especially the beloved sister, were at that very moment experiencing great inner conflict. She had already all but come to the conviction of the necessity of baptism, but her relatives raised many objections; indeed they accused the Loewens of bringing about the death of their parents if they were to be obedient to the Word of God and be baptized. It is strange, upon what absurdities and yet apparently valid reasons these people come, when they want to keep their own from the truth! We commit them to God and to the Word of His Grace, and time has proven that the fear of their friends was unfounded. For the night we travelled to Grossweide to the Jakob Friesens and

went to our friends, the Franz Wienses, for evening Bible study, which consisted in mutual edification and study of the Word. Tuesday the 18th we made a visit to a poor old widow, Mrs. Martens, whom we visited at the suggestion of her relatives (our friends). She really resembled a rose among the thorns, and even though she was not a member of our church, we could regard her as a sister in Christ, and unite in prayer with her. I for my part felt compelled to thank our loving Lord after this visit for the many benefits wherein he has favored me and so many of us as compared to this poor widow, who lacked care of body and soul. We continued to travel to Pastva, where we remained with Brother and Sister Warkentin for the night and rejoiced in the precious promises of the Word and sought to encourage, cheer and comfort one another, for the Warkentins found themselves in a sad plight [in family matters]. . . . Happy are we that the Word exhorts us to cast all cares upon the Lord. Wednesday the 19th we visited a sick widow, who, however, could not yet lay hold of the Savior and with Him the best consolation for life and death. As assurance that God does not desire the death of the sinner, I read Ezekiel 33:11 to her. Her son, who was about to leave for America, had a faith characteristic of many Jews today, that is 'one has to do penance and suffer punishments for one's sins, and thereafter one will be saved.' One becomes aware how essential it is to proclaim even among our own people the glad tidings that Jesus has saved us. We now journeyed to Pordenau, but stopped at several places along the way 'to recruit heirs of heaven;' but we found that most people with whom we wanted to speak were not at home. In Mariental, in the meantime, we were successful in praying together with a family, who ordinarily would not have favored this, but, because husband and wife were ill, permitted it. So we arrived at Brother and Sister Janzen in Pordenau where we had the opportunity of edifying a small gathering through God's Word. Thursday, the 20th we continued to make several house-visitations, and then had to leave the beloved circle of fellowship to search elsewhere for souls to lead to Christ. On Friday the 21st a discussion was requested by our brethren and sisters in Alexandertal, especially also because several of them intended to go to America. After a passage had been read from the Word of God and all of us had prayed, the brethren and sisters in turn voiced the complaints they had about one another.[313] Where this occurs in love, it can be beneficial. From Alexandertal we went to Elizabethal to Brother and Sister Warkentin, where we sought to strengthen and encourage one another in the good. Because Pentecost was near and circumstances forced each of us to go to his family, we decided to separate here. Brother Regier went home the same evening, while I went to Alexanderkrone to Brother and Sister Loewen where we discussed the Word of God. My plea is to the Lord that he may cleanse through His

blood the little we have done and make it bear fruit through His spirit. Requesting your intercessory prayers, your lowly brother, Jakob Dirksen."

b) Here we have another report by the same person. The report is somewhat abridged and deals with a journey beyond the boundaries of the Molotschna from August 15th to Nov. 1st, 1876. . . . "On August 15 I agreed with Br. Johann Regier to make a journey to the Mariopol Plan. I travelled to Klippenfeld with this brother. On Monday the 16th we travelled to Puchtin to friend Heinrichs, where we received a friendly reception. Soon we discovered that these people did not belong to the world, but that they loved the Savior, and as a result we could discuss the Word of God in close fellowship. John 3 was the subject of our discussion this evening. The proverb, 'As unknown and yet well known,' still proves true, and one feels at home with people whom one has not seen before, if only they love the Lord. Tuesday the 17th we visited a certain N.N., a friend of Br. Regier in his youth. He wanted, as one would say, what was right; however, he did not possess it as yet, and I believe he felt this too. His wife appeared to be a little ahead of him in spiritual perception. We prayed with them and then travelled to Wickerau [Mariopol 'Plan,' see *#236*] where our Brother Fitz lives. However, because he and his wife were not at home, we went to Rosengart to Br. Heinrich Liedtke, but he too came home late. Wednesday, the 18th, we conversed about the Word of God, had various experiences in doing so, and became agreed to visit the brethren and sisters in Belachvesch which is only several versts from Rosengart. Here we found some very child-like brethren and sisters. Although Romans 2:23 [?] did not seem to be appropriate to our outer circumstances, one soon perceived in connection with the relating of inner experiences, that this Word is most appropriate when describing our spiritual condition. After we had visited all the brethren and sisters who were at home here, had encouraged each other with a Word of God, and had become mutually strengthened in our faith, we turned around again and came back to Brother Fitz on the same day. (It should be noted here that during that time the enemies of the children of God were very agitated and had captured Br. Abraham Cornelsen from the Don; for this reason we were advised not to arrange for meetings.) After we had fellowshipped with him and his family, we returned to Puchtin on Thursday the 19th. Here we remained for the night again, visited seeking souls and admonished them to persevere in prayer and in searching the Scriptures, committed them to the Lord in prayer, and travelled to Klippenfeld on Friday, the 20th. On September 2nd I commenced the journey to Bessarabia with Brother Regier as agreed upon earlier in order to fulfill the wish of several brethren there. On the date already mentioned we came to Einlage to Brother and Sister Johann Friesen, rejoiced in seeing them again and

discussed many a matter dealing with the mission of the church and the kingdom of God. Friday the 3rd we made four home visitations and had various experiences in doing so. During the day we travelled to Andreasfeld where on Saturday the 4th we made more home visitations and took part in a meeting of the brotherhood in the afternoon. Sunday the 5th was a glorious day of blessings. We enjoyed the riches which God even here gives to His own as a reminder of what He has done for them. In the evening we experienced with joy how the Spirit of the Lord convicted several youths, who, as a result of this conviction, pleaded for the forgiveness of God and man. A song service, at which glorious choir songs resounded, formed the conclusion of this lovely day. Monday, September 6th, Brother Peter Froese took us to the steamer at Alexandrovsk. In Nikopol we looked up Br. Johann Wieler [who at that time had a private school there], conversed about the Word of God and remained with him for the night. Tuesday we came to Sergeievka. Thursday the 9th Br. Warkentin brought us to Gr. Lepaticha from where we continued our journey by steamer, and during the course of the day became acquainted with two persons, who regarded themselves as believers. They were a school teacher, Davidson, from Novopoltavka and a pastor, Julius Peters, from Alt-Schlangendorf. We could, however, not converse much, for just when we became well acquainted, we were already near to Kherson and became almost lost in the crowds. Friday on September 10th we arrived in Odessa in a good state of health in spite of storm and rain, looked up Brother and Sister Wuensche, and also found Br. Liebig [at that time pastor of the congregation in Odessa and surrounding region, living in the colony Annental] present in Odessa, and in the evening we went to the suburb Moldavanka where together we led in an evening Bible study. Sunday the 12th we attended the meeting of our Baptist brethren and sisters, where Br. Liebig (using the same text in the morning and the afternoon) delivered an anointed message from which I received rich blessings. Monday September 13th we travelled 40 versts by wagon to Ovidiopol to a Russian market place. Here we met a converted German, Matthias Klein, and because we waited for the arrival of the steamer, with which one has to cross the 10 versts-wide Liman, we, seated in an old boat, could recount much of the grace and love of our Lord, being also reminded of how our Savior, seated in a boat taught and preached. In the evening in Ackermann, a city in Bessarabia, in a German station we got into a somewhat heated discussion particularly regarding baptism. Those people belonged to the Lutheran confession and tried to prove the blessings of child-baptism with great zeal, whereby they naturally stumbled upon follies, which were not difficult for us to refute, since we had the whole Word of God on our side. Tuesday, September 14, we travelled to Mologa, to German Danielsfeld, which was really the goal of our journey.

Here we visited all the brethren who learned the truth about baptism through the mission of Gaede and Jaeckel [cf. above, 'Kuban'], but unfortunately also had been led to many false conceptions by these brethren. [314] After we had visited all of them in their cottages, had spoken and presented God's Word twice in evening meetings, and had admonished them to unity of spirit and faith, we turned back on Thursday the 16th, and after another brief visit in Odessa, came to Annenfeld in the Crimea via Sevastopol and Simferopol where we arrived on September 22 at the home of Br. Wall. Here, on Thursday the 23rd we had a well-attended and meaningful evening Bible study at the school. [Home on the 27th]. . . . On the 9th of October I travelled to Neu-Hoffnungstal [the parish of the late Pastor Wuest] to Brother and Sister Peter Siemens [a Semstvo teacher, cf. *#196*, k] where we had a blessed fellowship both morning and afternoon. In the evening it was the pleasure of our loving Lord to bless us (especially me) through the word in Eph. 2:8-9. On September 11th I went to Berdiansk to the German Counsul [D. was a foreigner]. Here I had a conversation with a number of believers during the evening and was invited especially by Pastor Buhler to proclaim the Word in their church. This I could, however, not do this time because of circumstances. On the 13th I visited homes in Rosenfeld and Neu-Hoffnungstal and in the evening led in a fellowship hour at the home of Brother and Sister Siemens. . . . May our loving Lord purify all efforts through His blood, fill with His Spirit, and bless with His blessing! This is the wish and the prayer of yours in the Lord, Jakob Dirksen—Muensterberg."

2. "Annual Report of the year 1876 by Jakob Jantz, Friedensfeld. In retrospect I have little to boast about the past year; on the contrary, I am compelled to thank our loving Savior that He has not requited us according to our sins, but has been gracious to us according to His great mercy. If I examine the conditions in our church according to the Word of God, I fear whether the words of Rev. 2:4, 5 and 3:1 would apply to us and we be in danger that our lamp be removed from its stand. It is gracious of our loving Saviour to say: 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.' So the loving Savior does not want to discard us, nor does He want to take His grace from us, but would like to visit us with His rod when we fall into sin. This has frequently been my consolation when my heart has become heavy and I have comforted myself with the fact that my heavenly Father will know how to lead even me in order to keep me together with all poor sinners in Jesus Christ in order to place me transfigured before his throne. My longing is to arrive at this state and to thank my loving heavenly Father, my loving Savior, and the Holy Spirit in all eternity with new radiant words for His preservation and for His carrying me through this desert into the blessed beyond. I have not travelled too far this year. Twice I have been at the Molotschna, twice at

Sacharin, three times at Markusland, and three times at Annenfeld. For the 25th of October a conference,[315] to which delegates from all of the churches of Southern Russia were urged to come, was planned. From our congregation I travelled to the conference in the company of the brethren Christian Fischer [Baptist minister] and Eduard Gerlach. On this journey we visited several stations such as Kotschubei, Sagradovka, Poltavka, and were privileged to proclaim the salvation of the cross at these places. In Neu-Danzig I experienced great joy with the brothers and sisters there. It was really a resting place such as the one spoken of through the prophet in Ezekiel 34:15. On the Sunday before the conference the Word was proclaimed richly by several servants of God and many prayers of supplication and thanksgiving ascended to God. This appeared to create a positive impression upon many of those present. The Lutheran church in Neu-Danzig, in which two meetings were also conducted by the Baptists on Sunday, was opened to us. In this connection the words of Job in chapter 42:2 became very precious to me, 'I know that thou canst do everything.' Eleven years ago the Baptists were driven out of Neu-Danzig by the Lutherans, and because of hatred were sent to Turkey; now, however, we were permitted to see the miracle of God and discover how the majority of the inhabitants of Neu-Danzig had become converted to the Lord, and church and school were opened voluntarily to us. In spite of our weaknesses and imperfections the good Lord has revealed His grace and mercy richly here in our congregation [Friedensfeld]. Requesting your intercessory prayers, your weak servant in proclaiming God's Word, Jakob Jantz." (Cf. above "M.B. Church, Friedensfeld.")

For further reports of the itinerant ministry see *#233*—reports of Christian Schmidt and Abraham Unger. Reports of Johann Regehr and Jakob Wiens are also available.

3. The manner in which the reports of the itinerant ministers were read is interesting: the rule was that they be sewn into a copybook and sent from village to village where members of our congregations lived in the two volosts of the Molotschna. Every village had to give a receipt as to when the notebook had arrived, when it was read to the brethren and sisters of one or several neighboring villages, and when it had been sent to the next village. The supervisor of this matter was the tireless regulator Br. Philipp Isaak, Tiege. He himself wrote both the circulation and the reading schedules found at the beginning of the well-sewn copy-books of the reports with home-made covers. It will also be of interest to many a person from the Molotschna to read the names of the villages in which, 1876-1877, the members of the M.B. churches lived: "Circulation schedule: Altenau, Muensterberg, Blumstein—Ohrloff, Tiege, Blumenort, Rosenort—Tiegerweide, Rueckenau—Kleefeld,

Alexanderkrone, Neukirch, Friedensruh, Elizabethtal, Alexandertal—Pordenau—Grossweide, Pastva—Sparrau, Konteniusfeld—Waldheim, Hierschau, Landskrone, Gnadental, Gnadenheim, Alexanderwohl—Klippenfeld, Hamberg—Liebenau, Fuerstenau—Ladekopp, Muntau. The brethren and sisters will also put forth renewed efforts (or find it a joy) to read the reports of the itinerant ministers during the coming mission year, and therewith also help to further the work of the Lord through prayer and active involvement in giving, and then to send to each other the reports according to the given schedule in order that the brethren and sisters need not wait unnecessarily long for these blessings or be robbed of them entirely. The dates of the receipt and forwarding of the reports are entered on the last page. I would request that the reports be returned to me after they have been read in Muntau. With fraternal greeting according to Romans 12 from the 17th verse. Yours, united in Christ, Philipp Isaak."

In these note-books we find a long, interesting report by Brother Kargel, at that time pastor of the Baptist Church in St. Petersburg—a report which circulated among the Mennonite Brethren of the Molotschna and Chortitza; the M.B. Church had the joy to support the worthy preacher Kargel. At the meeting in Andreasfeld in 1874 plans were already made to print the reports of the itinerant ministry, a step which, however, was undertaken only after the appearance of the American *Zionsbote* (1886-87).

§239 C. *Brief Statistical Report of the M.B. Conference in Russia up to the 25th Anniversary, January 6, 1885.*

A. Churches and Affiliated Churches (Divisions, Stations):
   I. Molotschna—Divisions: 1) Puchtin (Gnieden-Blumenheim). 2) Crimea (Spat). 3) Herzenberg (Alexandrovka).
   II. Einlage—Divisions: 1) Andreasfeld. 2) Wiesenfeld. 3) Jasykovo-Nikolaipol. 4) Grossfuerstenland (Sergeievka). 5) Burwalde. 6) Nepliuiev.
   III. Kuban—Divisions: Turkestan (see "M.B. Churches in Turkestan").
   IV. Friedensfeld and Sagradovka.
   V. The M.B. Church at the "Mariopol Plan" and on the "Don Side" (left the M.B. Church and joined the Baptist Union in 1886-87).
   VI. The M.B. Church on the Volga: "Hahnsau" and "Popovka" came to an end in 1880 either by emigration or by joining the Baptist Union.

B. Membership of around 1800, including families of members, 4000.

C. Ordained—elders, 4; representatives of elders and ministers, 35; deacons, 20; candidates, 20.

D. Meeting Houses 1) Rueckenau 2) Andreasfeld 3) Wiesenfeld (School) 4) Nikolaifeld (Jasykovo) 5) Kuban 6) Friedensfeld 7) Sagradovka (Altenau).
E. Fellowship and Communion Groups according to the count of the congregations and divisions: 17.
F. Children Worship Services, Sunday schools, as in E.
G. Annual Conference held: 13.

NB! The essence of the Jubilee Celebrations on January 6, 1886 in Rueckenau is given in *#112* and *#123*.

XXXI.
A SHORT HISTORY OF THE M.B. CHURCH IN RUSSIA FROM 1885-1910 DURING THE SECOND QUARTER CENTURY OF ITS EXISTENCE

I. *The M.B. Congregation of Rueckenau-Molotschna 1885-1910* §240
Halbstadt Province Taurida,
District Berdiansk

In this chapter we arrange the congregations according to the dates of their origin. For a consideration of the churches of the Molotschna we are utilizing the survey of Br. David Schellenberg by permission. We are using it freely, abbreviating parts, shifting other parts and supplementing from our own knowledge and other materials according to need as stipulated by the organization as well as the purpose of our history. We want to be very brief in this chapter on contemporary history, the events of which are rather recent and unsettled.

1. In the autumn of 1886 an open conference took place in Rueckenau (cf. *#223*) just at the time when Elder Abraham Schellenberg was present as a guest from America. Under bountiful blessings and excellent attendance, the discussions centered mainly around the themes of continuous fellowship with God in a life of sanctification and the return of our Lord.

2. On July 6, 1886, the brethren already mentioned: Jakob Reimer, David Duerksen and Peter Bergmann (*#227*) as well as Isaak Koop, Waldheim, and Isaak Friesen, Gnadenheim were ordained [316] as ministers by Elder D. Schellenberg in Rueckenau at a well attended orientation service blessed by the Lord.

3. During the eighties and onward the course of the development of the congregation was a blessed one. The brotherhood and particularly the brethren in the ministry of the Word sought diligently to practice the

apostle's admonition in Ephesians 4:3, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." At that time! "Unity strengthens" and "God gives grace to the humble!" The power of the Holy Spirit was revealed in the admonition of those who walked unwisely, as well as in the "church council meetings" and in the discussions at church fellowship meetings. The elder was modest and wise and recognized the gifts of others willingly. Many blessings accompanied the early period of Br. D. Schellenberg's service as elder. (Unfortunately this changed later until in 1909 circumstances occurred as a result of which the office of the elder in Rueckenau was not exercised.) In addition to a wise church leadership, the preaching ministry was also blessed, especially the itinerant ministry of the brethren David Duerksen and Jakob Reimer, Molotschna, as well as, finally, the itinerant brethren of other churches.

4. In addition to the customary visitations of the itinerant ministers, longer journeys were also undertaken. The congregation was richly endowed with teachers and hence could render services to those outside its fold. Br. D. Schellenberg could recognize it as the will of God to make a journey to visit the M.B. churches in America. Through the preaching of the Word and through numerous blessed conversations, he was able to be a blessing to many and experience bountiful blessings on this journey. Similarly Br. Jakob Reimer made a journey to America in order to work there in a blessed ministry for the Lord, and after him Br. David Duerksen (1896) who found many opportunities to proclaim the precious Gospel in power. Also, quite a number of journeys to Russian Poland [317] were undertaken (see under M.B. Churches in Poland) and two journeys to West and East Prussia by Jakob Jantz, elder of the Friedensfeld congregations, and David Duerksen, now elder of the M.B. Church of the Crimea, and everywhere the Gospel of the cross was proclaimed abundantly.

5. The flourishing spiritual life of the churches was not spared temptations. In the 1890s a renewed strong desire to acquire more land became evident. These factors were accompanied by a decline of interest for work in God's kingdom and by a weakening of the efforts of proclaiming the Gospel. "It need not have been this way if everything could have occurred in the correct manner and many had not attempted too much in terms of acquiring more property. Indeed, it sometimes happens as Pastor Christen said in a sermon [to the Ohrloff congregation]: Many sell their village farms and move into the country in order finally to possess more land, too, but, instead of possessing the land, the land takes possession of them. One should learn to say: Hands off! Furthermore, the spirit of the times has taken a powerful hold of many hearts: some aspire upward too much, have become involved in factories and other business and suffer loss through such involvement."

(Schellenberg). Not a little dishonor has been brought upon the cause of God and the good name of the church through such dealings.

§241 6. Much agitation in the churches arose regarding the question of marriage, that is "whether members of the M.B. Church should be permitted to marry non-members, without being excommunicated—or according to the wording of the regulation—to be regarded as having left the fellowship by entering into such a marriage. Since the inception of the churches, when such marriages were rare occurrences, the rule had arisen that when members were accepted into the fellowship they promised not to enter into such unions. The discussions about this matter caused some strife, since some heatedly pressed to have the regulation dropped, whereas others could not understand how such a step could ever be tolerated. So, for a while mutual trust was almost lost in the brotherhood. However, at the annual convention of 1895, the majority decided to drop the regulation and to examine each case individually and act according to insight gained. The majority of the members of the Molotschna congregations agreed with this decision." The question whether ministers be permitted to solemnize marriages of unbaptized persons was again raised especially by the younger congregations not familiar with the experiences of their elders. All questions regarding this problem have, however, been answered by the conferences, and this in the spirit of the resolutions agreed upon at one time in the congregation at Einlage (*#137, 212*).

§241(2) 7. The Molotschna congregation, too, experienced difficulties from the police authorities similar to those of the Einlage congregation discussed in *#214*. "In the year 1885 one Sunday just at the time when baptismal candidates were being examined, the police entered the meeting house at Rueckenau and requested vehemently that we prove whether our congregation and our meeting house had been confirmed by the authorities. He was told that we Mennonites have the right to practice our doctrine according to our confession of faith and according to our tradition. Nevertheless, the confirmation of our meeting house had not yet been granted in spite of repeated applications." At the provincial government of Taurida the question arose as to who was responsible for the confirmation of the Mennonite churches since the imperial law relating to the Mennonites did not make provision for such a confirmation formerly taken care of by the Supervisory Commission. Subsequently the congregation requested of the Supervisory Commission that the meeting house at Rueckenau be sanctioned on the basis of the general regulations regarding public church buildings, something that has been done with all Mennonite meeting houses since this time, probably as a result of an inquiry by provincial authorities at the central board of

colonization. With regard to the Mennonite church question, the following should be noted as important: the law nowhere specifies that the Mennonites "must" have public meeting houses, but that they "may" build such on their land (Article 121, Part II, Volume XII). As long as Mennonites have been in Russia, public worship services have been held in private homes, as in the Chortitza settlements from 1789 onward. At least nine-tenths of the marriage ceremonies and funeral services are held in homes. This is part of the Mennonite "Church Regulations and Traditions" guaranteed in Article 1104, [318] Part I, Volume XI published in 1896. [319] In the meantime this new official unfamiliar with our situation, had informed the governor of Taurida, that here in Rueckenau a Baptist congregation had been formed without sanction or permission of the proper authorities. Thereupon the provincial authorities demanded that within a month request be made for the approval of the elder, the minister, and the Rueckenau meeting house. As a consequence, on January 23rd, 1886, through the brethren D. Schellenberg and P.M. Friesen, the explanation to the Ministry of the Interior through the Department of Religious Affairs of Foreign Confessions of Faith of March 6, 1880, [*#214(2)*] was presented to the governor of Taurida. At the same time a request was made that he clarify to the police officer that the church in Rueckenau was a Mennonite and not a Baptist congregation according to #903 (now 1104). By the grace of God, the petition accomplished its purpose entirely. In the year 1887 Br. P. M. Friesen, residing temporarily in the Kuban at this time and authorized by the church, succeeded in securing the confirmation of the meeting houses in Rueckenau and Spat in the Crimea. "On the 11th of January of the same year (1887) he was empowered to seek this confirmation and already on January 27th our meeting house was approved by the authorities. [320] And so through God's gracious help rest had been restored even in this matter for a long period of time" (Schellenberg). Nevertheless, as in Einlage, this question was also to be raised once again in the Molotschna M.B. Church. Just as it had been a Mennonite in the former, so it was also a Mennonite here, who, as a result of personal antipathies, tried to cast suspicion upon and harm the M.B. Church for a long period of time. "In the year 1895 more unrest arose from this quarter. Our annual convention in Rueckenau in the month of May was attended by the aforementioned H. Pristav and since he once again submitted a report to the provincial authorities according to his false conception of the matter (as though the convention were a Baptist one) the authorities ordered that he suspend the meetings. That led to investigations as to whether they were Mennonites or Baptists at nearly all places from which brethren had come to take part in the deliberations, because the police officer had recorded the passports. Then we investigated on our part how higher authorities

regarded this matter" (Schellenberg). After our two authorized brethren (Elder D. Schellenberg of the Molotschna and Rev. Wilhelm Dyck of the Einlage Church) had introduced themselves to the Director of the Department of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior, the privy councillor Mossolov, and had submitted a written brief they received the answer the essence of which was "that really one harbored the suspicion against both Mennonites and Baptists that through them one were playing into the hands of the Stundists. One could not deny to the M.B. Church the rights of the Mennonites if they themselves did not renounce them. They were to have liberty in their deliberations in matters of faith and church affairs as long as they respected the law. Their large festive gatherings, however, such as this convention and the huge songfests [321] ought to be regarded as propagandizing." The explanation of the ministry, Nov. 25 (Dec. 28), 1896, cited in *#214*, is to be considered the answer to the request of the brethren Schellenberg and Dyck (at the same time the answer to the presentations from the province of Ekaterinoslav). In this way God led the M.B. Church to a new stability in its rights, which had come under attack either as a result of ignorance or ill will.

§241(3)

8. a) As far as the annual brotherhood consultations or conventions are concerned, they are *de jure* (legally) simply extended brotherhood meetings: e.g., the Molotschna or any other M.B. congregation sets up from time to time, besides its customary brotherhood meetings, such extended conventions for especially important questions in order to preserve versatility and unity with the sister congregations. The area congregation initiating such meetings requests representation from the sister churches; most of the congregations cooperate in sending the requested delegates. The local congregation limits its number of voting brethren to a small number and extends equality of representation to the sister congregations. It has been the custom in the Mennonite churches from time immemorial to allow any approved elder, minister, brother or sister of sister congregations to have this privilege in the brotherhood, be their stay at such meetings of long or short duration. (Cf. above *#15* h and *#63* "Cornelius Warkentin.") According to law, the local legally instituted elder is responsible for leadership. One or more assistant leaders may be approved by the voting delegates of the meeting. Upon reports of their delegates at regular congregational meetings, all M.B. congregations discuss the decisions reached at these brotherhood meetings and either approve or disapprove the action taken. [322] The decisions accepted by all congregations become constitutionally binding for the M.B. brotherhood. Maintained [323] and explained in this way the internal affairs of the M.B. brotherhood in Russia will receive no opposition from the Russian government so impartial to foreign creeds (cf. XXV Claassen's petition, etc.). In essence

the congregations of the Mennonite brotherhood follow the same pattern in their local brotherhood meetings and at their general conference sessions (in which the M.B. Church participates in general questions such as school matters, and forestry service). b) Regarding "songfests' one could simply say that they are Mennonite festive worship services in song, and that they may be evaluated on the basis of the Mennonite ecclesiastical organization and custom.

§242 9. The divisions (affiliates, stations) of the M.B. Church of Rueckenau, Molotschna, in the most recent time (cf. above *#229*ff).

The center, the church of Rueckenau-Molotschna in the narrower sense, in the villages of the Molotschna volosts of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld falls into six groups according to places where meeting houses are found: Rueckenau, Tiege, Tiegenhagen, Alexandertal, Waldheim, and Sparrau. The religious leadership is found in the "statistics" towards the end of the book.

The following are affiliates since the congregations in the Crimea and Memrik have become independent.

1) and 2) Gnieden-Blumenheim and Puchtin (*#229*) Province of Ekaterinoslav, District of Alexandrovsk; Postal Address for Gnieden: Pakrovskoe, Province of Ekaterinoslav; for Puchtin Gulaypole, Province of Ekaterinoslav. Leadership around 1901: Minister Tobias Voth and Jakob Wieler (student at St. Chrischona).

3) Herzenberg-Alexandrovka (*#229*) Province of Ekaterinoslav, District of Pavlograd; Postal Address: Petropavolovka, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

The first co-founders and spiritual leaders have, as we know, been called home during this period of time: Minister Jakob Dirksen 1892 and Deacon Johann Kliewer 1901. Br. Wilhelm Baerg of Muensterberg, ordained as minister in 1886, who moved to the Province of Ufa in 1894. The following brethren were in positions of leadership around 1903-05: Minister Dietrich Friesen (formerly elementary school teacher) ordained in 1895; candidates for the ministry Jakob Dirksen and David Wiens (students at the Halbstadt Secondary School); candidate for the diaconate: Johann Lohrens.

4) Lugovsk (Neu-Samara) since 1891 founded on the property purchased by the Molotschna Colony—as Sagradovka and Memrik: Province of Samara, District of Busuluk. Postal address: Pleschanovsk, Province of Samara.

Leadership around 1905: Minister Abram Martens (now elder), Daniel Friesen, Klaas Toews, Kornelius Neufeld (graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School, student at the Evangelical Pastors School of Basel

and Spurgeon's Pastors College in London, now founder and principal of a four grade coeducational continuation school at Davlekanovo). Deacons: Isaak Wiens and Jakob Fast. Own congregational meeting house. Independent church since 1910. (See also *#255 (3)*).

5) Gortschakovka, in existence since 1894 and founded by Mennonite land purchasers and tenants from the Molotschna colonies, Province of Ufa, District of Belebei; Postal address Davlekanovo, Province of Ufa.

Leadership around 1903-1905: Minister Wilhelm Baerg (formerly Herzenberg), Isaak Friesen, Bernhard Friesen, Johann Rempel, Johann Heinrichs, Jakob Martens (formerly elementary school teacher and formerly minister of the M.B. Church in Sagradovka, owner and principal of the four-grade school for the poor) and Gerhard Claassen[324] (graduate of the Halbstadt Pedagogical Secondary School, formerly public school teacher). Deacons: Abram Neufeld, Johannes Claassen, Johann Kroeker and Jakob Loewen. Own congregational meeting house. Since 1910 an independent congregation with council of elders. (See also *#255 (4)*).

6) Karagui-Kamyschevo, since 1898; founded on property purchased by the Molotschna Colony—such as Sagradovka and Memrik; Province and Territory of Orenburg. Postal address: Pokrovskoie, Province of Orenburg.

Leadership around 1903-05: Minister Johann Bargen and Wilhelm Giesbrecht. Deacon Johann Epp. The church has its own seal and its own registry; the church has its own meeting house. Independent church since 1910—Elder? (Cf. also *#255 (5)*).

7) Tschunaievka, since 1900; founded by land purchasers from the Molotschna and other colonies. District Akmolinsk; region, Omsk. Postal address: Omsk.

Leadership around 1903-05: Minister Jakob Wiens (now elder) and Heinrich Ewert. Own meeting house. Independent since 1907 (Cf. also *#255*).

8) Friesenov (Perfilievka)—as Tschunaievka since 1901; District Akmolinsk, region Petropavlovsk. Postal address: Tokuschie.

Leadership around 1905: Minister David Janzen. Own meeting house. Sine 1907 affiliated with the M.B. Church at Tschunaievka.

9) Kremliovka, since 1901 (as above 7 and 8), Province of Tobolsk, District Tiukalinsk. Postal address: Omsk.

Leadership around 1905: Minister Wilhelm Giesbrecht (formerly Karagui). Own meeting house. Since 1907 affiliated with the M.B. congregation, Tschunaievka.

10) Gorikaia, since 1903 (as above 7, 8, 9) Akmolinskaia District. Gorikaia.

Leadership around 1905: candidate for the preaching ministry, Jakob Friesen. Since 1907 affiliated with Tschunievka.

11) Michailovka since 1904 (as above 7-10) Akmolinsk District. Postal address: Tokuschie.

Leadership around 1905: Minister Kornelius Klassen. Since 1907 affiliated with Tschunaievka (above 7-11, cf. also *#255*).

12) Talma, since 1901 founded by the settlers on land purchased by the Molotschna Colony such as Sagradovka, Memrik, etc. Tierskaia District, region Chassav-Iurt. Postal address: Chassav Iurt, Tersk District.

Leadership around 1905: Minister Jakob Doerksen (now elder); candidate for the preaching ministry, Kornelius Wittenberg, David Woelk; deacon: Gerhard Wiens. Candidates for the diaconate: Gerhard Sukkau, Johann Loepp. Church secretary: Heinrich Sukkau. Own meeting house. Independent church since 1910. (See also *#255* (*2*)).

NB! Concerning 4-12, cf. below *#255-255* (*5*).

§243 II. *The M.B. Church, Einlage, Chortitza Region from 1885-1910*

Province and District of Ekaterinoslav
(Postal Address: Kitschkas, Province Ekaterinoslav)

1. a) The characteristics of the total M.B. Church at Einlage during this period. This congregation which has been instrumental in inspiration and leadership in the M.B. Conference during the period from 1866-1872 and during a large part of the period to 1885, gradually withdrew from its leading position in the General Conference and the church of the Molotschna became more influential and stimulating in the leadership role since about 1880. This was due to a large extent to the activity of Johann J. Wieler (teacher at the Halbstadt Secondary School 1879-1883) and to the young, vigorous, friendly, modest and enthusiastically active Elder David Schellenberg as well as to the ministries of the brethren Jakob Reimer (Rueckenau) and David Duerksen (Margenau-Schoental in the Crimea) as well as others who emerged from the Molotschna congregations. In the M.B. Church of Einlage deep, far-reaching changes occurred in the circle of the most influential brethren. Br. A. Unger, influential even as non-active elder, died as we know in 1880. Br. A. Lepp was getting on in years; Br. Johann Siemens, influential for a long period of time in the whole conference as outstanding itinerant minister, who because of his residence near the elder in Andreasfeld as well as because of his energetic character became

the unofficial co-elder, died in 1890; Jakob Reimer (Wiesenfeld) became older and more quiet and died in the year 1891. In the real church center at Einlage sad spiritual-ethical circumstances arose, demanding disciplinary action by the church. These circumstances, which harmed and brought deep sorrow to the whole congregation, greatly weakened the well-known brother Johann Friesen, Sr., "Giver," spiritual orator, conference treasurer, committee chairman, friendly host, and loving mediator between persons and parties within the congregation, prematurely making him an invalid. Jakob Koslowsky, Sr., however (whom we would like to call the "Philipp Isaak of Einlage"—in his—Koslowsky's—good time), was, figuratively speaking, killed by the sad state of affairs in the church and thus became impotent in work for the cause of the church and God's kingdom on earth. After the period of storm and stress other converted men became active at the local church as well as at the conference level. Included among these were the already mentioned brethren Dietrich Klassen (deceased at Friedensfeld), Peter Peters (later, Naumenko), Cornelius Fehr and Martin Koslowsky of Jasykovo, Gerhard Siemens (Nepliuiev-Naumenko); Wilhelm Dyck (Jasykov-Andreasfeld-Naumenko-Don), graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School, formerly elementary school teacher and secretary of the Nikolaipol Volost; Jakob Siemens (Jasykov) an influential member of committees and conference treasurer following Johann Friesen, Sr.; Herman Neufeld (Sergeievka-Ignatievka), for many years itinerant preacher of the conference; of the older brethren, although not too old in years, Cornelius Reimer, for many years active as secretary and member of the conference committee, minister at Wiesenfeld (son of Jakob Reimer—Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld, at one time fellow student of the author at the Halbstadt Secondary School and in his early years elementary school teacher, now founder and leader of the girls school in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna) and others.

The period of the Einlage congregation dealt with at this time has an anonymous reporter from the midst of the leadership of the M.B. Church—someone who knows the brotherhood from its cradle as "Mennonite" and who describes most of the Mennonite leaders at this time as "Mennonite-pietistic" [325] in contrast to Abraham Unger and his followers who might be designated as "Baptist-predestinarian." [326] By this we naturally do not mean that the latter wanted to wipe out Mennonitism systematically and that the former wanted to deny salvation to the Baptists. We know, indeed, that Oncken described Unger and his colleagues as adherents to Menno's distinctives, and that Aron Lepp proposed Liebig's second call and accepted the ordination by Oncken as teacher and co-elder; but we also know to what extent Unger was attracted to everything Hamburg had and practiced (although he never sacrificed any point of Mennonite teaching—cf. Oncken's letters of his

journeys, 1869—but he almost completely gave up the Mennonite flavor), and how close Lepp was associated with Leppke the "super-Mennonite." Furthermore, the anonymous brother distinguishes once again a group of those above mentioned as striving for and preaching sanctification, systematically and with purpose, another group more fervently preaching only conversion, baptism, and the cultivation of church life (naturally without denying the wish for and the duty of sanctification). The attitude towards the Baptists has remained formal and official as it was left at the annual meeting of 1876. (Cf. above *#209-11* and *221* and the concluding remarks of the *Confession of Faith* 1873/76). But a great cooling off and occasional hardheartedness and rejection occurred in the period of time under consideration both in the Einlage as well as in other M.B. congregations. The "alliance" or "open communion" movement, to be discussed in more detail at a later point, made these "Baptist-shy" brethren in as far as they were probably all of strong Anabaptist persuasion, consequentially and perhaps unconsciously more friendly to the Baptists. To a large extent the distance between Mennonite Brethren and their Baptist brethren was also due to the efforts of some from the Mennonite Church and other Mennonite groups who continually tried to force the Mennonite Brethren to become Baptists in the eyes of the law. (Compare *#214*). The strange thing about this is that the "Mennonite-pietist" stream did not evoke an affinity with the genuine believers of the Mennonite Church. This stream of Mennonite Brethren was cool towards both the Baptists and the Mennonites. Elder Lepp, moreover, has more than once expressed the view that communion fellowship with the Baptists would only be natural,[327] in spite of some important differences in doctrine (and small differences in church practice) and in consistent manner communion fellowship with all believers of the Mennonite Church with whom the Mennonite Brethren had complete unity in doctrine (in spite of greater differences in church practice). And in this the honorable brother, according to the author's conviction of forty years, is completely correct. (In fact, however, Lepp has not been able to contribute anything to bringing the groups closer to each other; unfortunately, he did not have the character of a reformer). In latter times, however, a greater spirit of fellowship and approachability has been established towards Mennonite believers.

b) If in this Mennonite movement much can now be understood in terms of antipathy to the Baptists, much was human weakness and not godliness, it is, nevertheless, certain that God did not wish that the M.B. Church lose the good Mennonite qualities, but that these qualities be revitalized and be translated into life, even as all good Baptist qualities were to be accepted—as has been the case with all good qualities of all Christian denominations according to the text: "prove all things, and hold

fast what is good"—"until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God," etc. The communication with the Baptists, however, has not been cut off completely. The use of Baptist literature, the Hamburg seminary—all missionaries of the M.B. Church of Russia have been students at Hamburg—interchange of visiting ministers between the Mennonite Brethren and Baptists—although all too rare—as well as monetary contributions to the needs of the Baptists—all these things, God be praised, have never ceased entirely.

c) The M.B. Church at Einlage cannot be exonerated from human frailties and one-sidedness, but even so one cannot deny a striving towards knowing and fulfilling of the will of God in many of its members, particularly in most of its workers; in meeting with many of these, the author has sensed deeply: "Here is the Holiness of God." Much faithful work to save souls, and to sanctify one's own life unto the Lord in body, soul, and spirit to build God's kingdom according to the best understanding, knowledge and insight, has been accomplished and will bear fruit for eternity and receive eternal rewards. But the infallible judge will have our wood, hay, and stubble destroyed by fire.

d) The external growth of the total congregation of Einlage (1885 to the end of 1901), from the point of which the divisions of Naumenko and Ignatievka began their own records and Kamenka-Orenburg became independent churches (exact statistics are missing), is marked by the acceptance of 1042 members by baptism in 17 years, which amounts to an average of sixty-one per year (over against 30 per year in the first 23 years).

e) The office of elder. At the end of the 90s Br. Martin Koslowsky was especially designated as co-elder. In the year 1903 Br. Aron Lepp retired. For too long the church had left the burden on his increasingly weakening shoulders. Br. Gerhard Regehr (from Tiegerweide—Molotschna, graduate of Ohrloff Secondary School and the Halbstadt pedagogical course, elementary school teacher for several years, living in Reinfeld, Jasykovo, ordained as minister in 1895) was elected by the church as his successor and was ordained by Elder Lepp in the presence of a number of elders of the M.B. Church. "Brother Martin Koslowsky, much more experienced than I, besides being perceptive and sensitive, stepped back humbly and offered me his help. Presently, too, our work prospers in unity although we are very different." (G. Regehr.)

f) The white-haired, honorable Br. Lepp has lived since then in quiet retirement at Naumenko with his family, now with his children in the new settlement in Siberia. More detailed biographical material we have not received in spite of continued questioning. For purposes of his characteristics we draw attention to *#128, 132, 200, 201, 202, 209-214.*

§244 2. The Divisions (Affiliates) of the M.B. Church at Einlage in the Last Period of Time (Cf. above *#216*).

The original church center Einlage. Old, weak and ill, Br. Johann Friesen, after the sale of his flourishing factory in 1904, moved to Rueckenau where he established a new home. In 1906 God permitted him to enter the eternal rest. The construction of a meeting house, the plan of which had been approved by provincial authorities, was obstructed by the protest from the village assembly of Einlage (Kitschkas), the collective owner of the property. This, indeed, had caused much pain to the old Brother Friesen. Finally, with approval of the village assembly, a beautiful meeting house having a seating capacity of 400 was dedicated.

Actual affiliated churches which, after the establishment of the Division of Kamenka, became independent churches are:

1) Andreasfeld (cf. above *#216*). Postal Address: Alexsandrovsk Province of Ekaterinoslav.

This affiliated congregation has been weakened considerably through departures of members to other locations as well as through the death of preaching and leading brethren. Later Br. Johann Hildebrandt, preaching minister in Alexanderheim, also moved here, and he too was called home through death in 1909.

2) Sergeievka-Alexandertal ("Grossfuerstenland") see above *#216*. Postal Address: Balschaia Lepaticha, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Leadership: minister Jakob Janzen (son of Wilhelm J.; cf. above XIX "Kronsweide"), Dietrich Wiebe. . . .

3) Burwalde (cf. above *#216*). Postal Address: Chortitza, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Around 1902-05 Minister Johann Hiebert was leader here. . . .

4) Wiesenfeld (cf. above *#216*). Postal Address: Zayzevo, Ufa district.

Jakob Reimer, Felsental-Gnadenfeld, who so often enters our history from the point of the "Gnadenfelder Brotherhood" and the "secession" to the completion of the stormy, early period of the M.B. church (*#51, 52, 75, 81, 82, 114-126, 132, 133, 198* and *216,* etc.) died here in 1891 in his 74th year. He was born 1818 in the Molotschna Colony, Kronsgarten. His father was David Reimer, his mother, Maria nee Neufeld. His youth, from age three to his marriage, was spent, as is known, on the farmstead at Felsental established by his father in 1820 (cf. above *#62,* c.). His last teacher here was the well-known pedagogue Heinrich Franz, Sr., whom he followed to the Gnadenfeld school as a youth of approximately the same age, and with whom he established a bond of intimate spiritual

friendship (cf. *#51, 52* and *62,* c). In Gnadenfeld, in this early period of his youth, he learned to know and to love the Christian way of its people. Here, already walking in the living faith, he was received into the congregation through baptism (he would very much have liked to be baptized by immersion, *#131,* b), instead of, as his dear father wished, in Rudnerweide. In Gnadenfeld he married a Miss Strauss and became an independent landowner and a prominent member of the village and the church assemblies of Gnadenfeld. Twelve days before his death he was visited by Elder Aron Lepp, and Minister Johann Friesen, Sr., Einlage Church, with whom he had worked together in fellowship for more than twenty-five years, although he had become progressively more quiet and reserved. A blessed celebration of the communion with these brethren and with the members of his family (following a detailed, heartfelt exchange of views with the five brethren) was his farewell to the fellowship. He died in child-like faith in the sole and completely valid salvation in Christ. [328] It should be emphasized that his most pleasant memories related to the times of fellowship in the brotherhood before the separation of the "Wuestian brethren," 1858, and that in the last years he associated intimately with his spiritual friends of Felsental and spent much time in theosophical thought, in loving and nostalgic memories of his spiritual cradle (cf. *#62*). In the year 1886 the author had the joy of having a long intimate conversation with the beloved honorable sage walking in his orchard, his "foretaste of paradise," [329] in which all favorite and interesting exhibits of the orchard and of the tree-nursery were shown, sketched biographically, and characterized with deep thoughts about creation, fall, redemption and consummation. Farewell till the redemption of our body when God will be all in all! Step by step we must leave memorial stones to the fathers of the M.B. Church. For us too evening descends; Lord, abide with us!

The leadership around 1905: Minister Cornelius Reimer. . . .

5) Jasykovo-Nikolaipol (cf. above *#219*). Postal Address: Chortitza, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

This branch is presently literally the church center. Here the leading brethren live: Elder Gerhard Regehr, Co-elder Martin Koslowsky, the preaching ministers Peter Toews, Johann Peters, for several years Heinrich Braun (cf. above Rueckenau), Johann Schellenberg (graduate of the pedagogical Secondary School, formerly elementary school teacher), the treasurer of the Conference, Jakob Siemens. . . .

6) Petrovka ("Naumenko"), since 1889 Province of Kharkov, District Isium. Postal Address: Barvenkovo, Province of Kharkov (for insured correspondence).

This affiliate was founded by "brethren" on privately purchased

lands leased by the villages, Petrovka, Vassilievka, Ielenovka and others, and by several families of industrialists in the area of Barvenkovo near the railway station having the same name. An initial period of economic and industrial bloom was followed by a rapid temporary decline. This had a great weakening effect on the spiritual life of the church in that it paralyzed several workers involved in the spiritual ministries of the church. Br. Gerhard Siemens moved here from Nepliuievo (cf. above *#216, 6*); from Ignatievo came the brethren Abram Paetkau and Johann Schellenberg; from Jasykovo, Br. Peter Peters (who withdrew from the work). Here Br. Peter Fast (Taschtschenak-Friedensfeld) lived for several years (after he had been landowner and teacher in the nearby Bessabotovka for several years) and passed away in old age. For some time, too, Br. Wilhelm Dyck (now at Millerovo in the Don territory) lived and worked here. Br. Gerhard Siemens, who had been active here for some 10 years as leading preacher, left the church in the year 1905 and labored in the M.B. churches of North America, but returned and entered into his former work. With the exception of those named, the following brethren were here (1905): Minister Jakob Wiebe and Benjamin Redekopp; the candidates for the ministry, since 1902, David Klassen, Jakob Martens, Abram Janzen and Jakob Thiessen. In Barvenkovo the following are active (1910): Minister Abraham Unruh (graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and the pedagogical course, formerly elementary school teacher, teacher of German language and religion at the Business School founded and supported in essence by Mennonites—cf. also below Spat-Krim) and Deacon Gerhard Froese. Both of these brethren were arrested and imprisoned for permitting a sermon in Russian by a Russian evangelical missionary in May of 1909. This arrest was perpetrated by an over-enthusiastic police official who made use of the tightened regulations for protection (against religious propaganda) in this area. Before the completion of the term (one month), an official dispatched from St. Petersburg declared the arrest illegal and the brethren were dismissed. The official, a provincial councillor Pavlov, gave clear and practical directives to the local preachers and to the representative of the Mennonite Brethren Conference, Minister Heinrich Braun, about the registration and (through this) the legalization of new Mennonite churches, regarding meetings. At the same time the annual meeting of the M.B. churches in Petrovka was to take place, but was prohibited by the local administration. Although central authorities in St. Petersburg gave permission for such a conference, this authorization arrived too late due to delays in government bureaucracy. The same thing happened with the permission to hold a conference in autumn! This time the obstruction was caused by an error in the address of a telegram. It is imperative in view of the new laws and regulations to know well the ways one must go (cf. above "Rueckenau" Conferences etc., footnotes).

Of the members of this congregation in 1901 four were active and three were formerly elementary school teachers. In 1902 this group of brothers and sisters had 180 members and 416 adherents. The villages of Petrovka, Vassilievka, Ielenovka, etc., have good school buildings. In Petrovka the congregation has a spacious meeting house. Several members of this M.B. Church live in the near-by Baptist colony, Bessabotovka (Elder Br. H. Schimpke).

Present leader of the church (1910) is Minister Gerhard Siemens. Formally the church is still regarded as an affiliate of Einlage, but actually it is independent and has its own seal and church register.

7) Alexanderheim since 1889, Province of Ekaterinoslav, District Pavlograd. Postal Address: Saizevo, Ufa.

This division is found on rented property in the village of the same name (near the railway station of Saizevo), founded predominantly by Mennonite Brethren. For a long time the leading minister here was Br. Johann Hildebrandt (passed away in 1909 in Andreasfeld); co-workers in church and Sunday school were the brethren Gerhard Friesen of Tiege and Gerhard Pettker of Fuerstenau; Br. H. Friesen, Jr., of Friedensfeld was school teacher here; now teacher at the last named place.

Leadership in 1903-05. Minister Johann Epp (formerly Kamenka, Orenburg).

8) Schoenwiese, since 1902. Province of Ekaterinoslav, District Alexandrovsk, Postal Address: Alexandrovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Leadership: Minister Peter Unger. . . .

III. *The Mennonite Brethren Church of the Kuban From 1885 to 1910* §245

Kuban Area, District of Batalpaschinsk
(Postal Address: Velikokniasheskoie, Kuban District)

1. a) Among the significant external events to be noted here are the deaths of the Elders Heinrich Huebert and Christian Schmidt. At age 85 the worthy Huebert "in faith in Christ gave up his spirit like a lamp when the oil is exhausted" (Daniel Fast). The life and character of the deceased has been dealt with extensively above. It should also be mentioned here that he was born in Muensterberg, in 1810, in what was then the very young Molotschna Colony. He was one of the first students, and an enthusiastic devotee of Tobias Voth. With him he shared a love for music and poetry as well as an interest in the sciences, particularly the contemplation of nature. When Huebert was already in his late seventies, he became rejuvenated and enthusiastic when he conversed with the writer about Voth. It was always with warmth and respectful affection that he mentioned his name. Huebert became a

farmer and the owner of a treadmill in Liebenau, for several years serving as assistant and village mayor. As regards the church he was, as it is well known, until the secession, a respected and beloved member of the church in Ohrloff-Halbstadt (formerly Ohrloff-Petershagen) and a friend of Gnadenfeld and of Wuest. In 1861 he sold his property in Liebenau.[330] After his release from investigative custody (Nov., 1865; cf. XVIII), he moved to Blumenort where for some time he lived with his in-laws, the Jakob Epps. Later, still in Blumenort, he became owner of a small farm situated on the upper side of the west end, until his resettlement in the Kuban, where he had always longed to go. The little, antiquated house in Blumenort (still standing today) with its roomy alcove (bedroom) attached on the garden side, was kept spotless and tidy, inside and outside, with the help of his wife. For some years it was the center of the M.B. Church on the Molotschna! Many deliberations and devotional sessions in smaller groups took place here. At the Kuban (from 1873) he had what for the time was a fine house, together with a small farm, an orchard, a nursery, and an apiary. He was always active in the yard and in his garden. This is how the author remembers him from the years 1886 to 1888. If there was nothing more important to do, he would be at the chopping block cutting brushwood "until he was numb with the rain and the cold," as his wife used to scold. She would then have to put him to bed and warm him up with coffee for he was extremely anemic. He became youthful and happy, however, when in a small circle of friends the topic of conversation turned toward our full redemption in Christ, His coming and His kingdom, and toward old times: Tobias Voth, Pastor Wuest, the brotherhood. This was especially so when he had had a good cup of coffee. He became pensively monosyllabic, quite understandably so, when the discussion turned to the aberrations of the young M.B. Church. His favorite authors were those of Wuerttemberg: Auberle, Philipp Paulus, and, from the earlier period, Christian Hoffmann and relatives. His most preferred ministers were Ludwig Hofacker, and especially Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacher and Charles H. Spurgeon. Occasionally, he used portions of the sermons of the latter two in the later sixties and early seventies, reading them in small Sunday worship services and adding commentary, explanation, and application in the Low German language. In spite of his weak voice and unimpressive presentation, our hearts were ignited by the deep conviction of faith and the exuberant hope and joy of his soul, and we were lifted joyously heavenward as though on the wings of a cherub.[331]

b) Brother Christian Schmidt, too, died within the time period here under consideration. His death came in 1905, ten years after the death of Huebert. (Cf. particularly sections *183, 193, 195-198, 206,* and *231-234*[2]). Schmidt spent his last years (at least twenty-five) in the Kuban region, where he was an enthusiastic citizen. He sought

constantly to persuade "Brethren" to move to this colony. Unfortunately most of his efforts were in vain. (It is strange that following the initial toil, stress, and disappointments, the M.B. Church never manifested a warm interest in, or a real understanding of this child and monument of the movement!) In his early years Schmidt was tirelessly engaged at his workbench (he was initially a woodworker by trade) but later increasingly engaged as a passionate gardener. It was "fist and hump-back" (according to the Russian idiom) in his daily occupation, [332] heart and head in his searching of the Word of God, bosom and tongue in his preaching and apologetics (defense of the doctrine) in private conversation. Always and everywhere, all of Schmidt was involved. It is to be noted that people in general, including children and young people insofar as they were inclined toward piety, became and remained his friends. To be sure, there was no lack of criticism, both justified and otherwise, from both brethren and opponents. The "overjoyous" faction disliked him as much as they disliked Jakob Reimer, and excommunicated him just as they did Reimer. The "Friends of Jerusalem" were his staunch opponents, as he was theirs. Nor did the author belong to those who particularly liked his methods or completely shared his views on matters of faith and life. And yet who could doubt his honesty and thoroughness as a Christian and as a citizen, and who could deny him love and honor? He was born in Konstantinograd in 1833 (cf. section *197*), received his schooling in part under the direction of Pastor Landesen in Kharkov (see section 75, Reimer and Dobbert), where he experienced deeply spiritual influences. In 1853, under the preaching of Pastor Wuest in Neu-Hoffnung, he came to a full understanding and assurance of the forgiveness of sin. He was baptized by Heinrich Huebert in August, 1861. Together with Jakob Jantz, in August of 1865, he was called to the teaching ministry, and in 1875, again together with Jantz, he was ordained as associate-elder in Friedensfeld (*#235*). His work as itinerant minister has been alluded to repeatedly above. The sowing he did during his life is inseparably bound up with the work and essence of the M.B. Church. To a not insignificant degree it received its unique character through him. May his memory be guarded lovingly, together with that of his co-workers who have already died or who will soon do so! The dross burns; the gold remains. Brother Abraham Peters died during this period as well, as did the aged deacon, Brother Johann Fischer.

Among the elderly sisters and mothers of the M.B. Church who died during this period were the widow of Johann Friesen of Gnadenheim; Mrs. Peter Berg; the widow of Jakob Epp of Blumenort; the mother of Mrs. Maria Huebert (wife of Elder Huebert), who herself died about five years after her husband; the widow of Simon Harms, daughter of Elder Huebert; Mrs. Krause, nee Dyck, of Sparrau; the first wife of Jakob

Giesbrecht; and others. Brother and Sister Peter Dyck of Pordenau, at one time very active in this church, migrated to America (about 1890) and are now living in California.

§246 2. Since the Kuban settlement is particularly and officially a colony of the M.B. Church, we include here more detail about its civil, economic, and social character at the present time (about 1904). Compare *#180, 206,* and *231-234.*

a) The population of both villages, Velikokniashesk and Alexandrodar (formerly Wohldemfuerst and Alexanderfeld), or the Volost of Velikokniashesk, totaled more than 2,000 persons in 1904. Of these about 1,500 were of Mennonite extraction and legal status. Of the latter some 1,000 persons were registered in the volost. Over 200 of those so registered, and over 550 of the entire church population ("Church registry entries"), belonged to the M.B. Church. Some 50 of the Mennonite population were Adventists, and about 100 persons of Mennonite extraction belonged to the "Templers." [333] Thus the larger portion of the Mennonite population belonged to the Mennonite Church; Baptists (i.e. "Brethren" of non-Mennonite extraction and legal status) numbered about sixty. Approximately 400-500 persons belonged to the Orthodox, Catholic, and Lutheran churches and to the Jewish confession. The majority of the non-Mennonites were Orthodox Christians. As to the landowners and the enfranchised members of the volost community, it was the "brethren" who constituted the determinative majority and as a rule held most of the civic offices.

b) The land possessions of the volost community consist of sixty-seven full farms (in Alexandrodar such a farm comprises sixty-one dessiatines; in Velikokniashesk, sixty-five) [334] and eight small farms of ten dessiatines each (Velikokniashesk—five; Alexandrodar—three). Classified by vocation and ownership, ten landless day-laborers, 150 landless trandesmen and industrial tradesworkers, eight small-farm operators, twenty-two half-farm operators, and fifty-seven full-farm operators lived in the villages in 1904. Of the latter some owned more than one farm. Also, there were fifteen landowners who held property outside the colony (estate owners). [335] Only a few persons (single adults, family heads, or widows) received regular assistance for the poor from the churches or the volost. Large industry and business: there were two factories producing farm machinery, two steam-operated mills, three watermills, one "Dutch" windmill, one ordinary windmill, one cheese factory, three general stores, four market gardens, one large communal vineyard, several prosperous apiaries, one apothecary warehouse, one drug store, and one bookstore. Co-operative enterprises: One consumer

co-operative with store, one cheese-making co-operative (the above), one grape-growing co-operative (the above vineyard). Associations for educational and cultural purposes: one music association; one reading association with a lending library. There were two resident physicians and one druggist. Public buildings: one church building of the Mennonite Church (since then also a meeting place of the "Temple" Church), two three-room schools (now four-room and five-room), one area administration office (volost administration), one grain storehouse, one music hall (belonging to the above-mentioned association). The property value of the entire colony (assessed certainly in keeping with characteristic Mennonite care and modesty): 800,000 rubles (1904), i.e., 400 rubles per person, and 2,000 rubles per family (reckoning five persons per family). At the beginning of the year 1904 the volost donated 1,000 rubles to the Red Cross. Proportionately there is hardly another Mennonite group that has received as much honor and reward from the government as the leading men of this colony (including even the conferring of nobility or heredity honorary citizen status), beginning with the decoration of Johann Claassen. [336]

§247 3. The school system of this settlement is a model for all Mennonite colonies. Each of the two villages today has a four-room public school. Boys attend school between the ages of eight and fourteen or seventeen, girls between the ages of eight and twelve or fifteen. In 1904 all (?) of the six teachers were members, or children of members (adherents), of the M.B. Church. For twenty-four years (until 1902) David Johann Claassen was principal teacher in Velikokniashesk, first in the private school, and since 1881, in the combined school. He was a graduate of the Halbstadt Secondary School with a tutor's diploma. Beginning in 1880, his colleague was Johann Jakob Friesen [337] of Altenau, Molotschna, also a graduate of the teacher-training school in Halbstadt. Since 1889, Gerhard Jakob Giesbrecht was the third teacher, and in 1904 he became principal. (He had studied medicine at the University of Kharkov but because of illness was not able to complete his studies.) At present he is a private citizen.

In Alexanderfeld Isaak Fast was for many years teacher in the one-room school. Fast came from Gnadenfeld, and had been a student of Heinrich Franz, Sr. Previously he had taught in the association school in Ohrloff for several years and then had been teacher in a Russian "Semstvo" school. Fast, now a private citizen, was, and is presently, the leader of the "Temple Church." He is a man of outstanding intelligence, and is the writer's warm personal friend and intense religious opponent. Between 1887 and 1910 Johann Fast taught here. He was the son of Johann Fast who died in Rueckenau. He, too, graduated from the teacher training school in Halbstadt, and was an ordained

minister in the M.B. Church. For many years the second teacher was Kornelius Abram Wiens, graduate of the Secondary School in Ohrloff. Since 1905 he was an ordained elder of the M.B. Church. In 1904 the school in Alexanderfeld became a three-room school and now (1910) has four rooms. Since 1904 (?) a third teacher here was the son of the above-mentioned Johann Fast, a graduate of the school in Alexanderfeld and the state school in Berdiansk. By 1904 approximately 200 students from outside the colony had attended the school in Velikokniashesk: Orthodox Russians, Molokans, and Russian Baptists, Poles, Georgians, Armenians and children of the mountain tribes (Gorzy, i.e. Muslims). To date, six former students of this school have gone on to secondary schools and two of them into higher education.

§248 4. a) In the spiritual and intellectual areas, the Kuban Church, toward the end of the earlier period and the beginning of the period here under consideration (since 1885), experienced a serious slackening and despondency of spirit. This has been referred to in sections 231-234 above. The influence of the Friends of Jerusalem upon the more intelligent youth of the M.B. Church was so strong that some feared (and others hoped) that they would totally defect to this fellowship. For a long time almost no baptisms of young men and women born of Mennonite Brethren parents occurred. Indeed, the reception of new members into the church was a very rare event. The leaders and the older members complained and sighed unceasingly, and many called upon God incessantly in prayer. Then late in 1887 a miraculous spiritual revival took place. Among other things, the visit of the itinerant ministers Jakob Reimer of Rueckenau and Wilhelm Loewen of Alexanderkrone made a deep impact. A large number of young men and young women (some very young), as well as young married couples and a few older persons who were descendants of M.B. members but had joined the Mennonite Church, together with others, came to the faith. Most of these were received into the M.B. Church. Some who had left the church or had been excommunicated returned to the fellowship. [338] The following teachers and their wives became new members of the M.B. Church: David Claassen, [339] Johann Friesen, Johann Fast, Gerhard Giesbrecht. The majority of the most promising youth and children became members of the M.B. Church. Already prior to this increase there had been evident an upsurge of spiritual life which was intensified by this growth. A debt on the church building, which for years had burdened the church and seemed impossible to liquidate, was now paid off in less than two years through a unified effort of all able-bodied members. Economically, too, the church recovered when after a number of difficult years the colony experienced good crops. The village community of Wohldemfuerst had had the courage to erect a fine new school building. The M.B. Church,

too, was encouraged to renovate the deteriorated meeting house. They enlarged it at the expense of the teacherage which had been a part of the structure and was now provided for elsewhere. Alexanderfeld followed suit shortly by erecting a two-room village school building. In 1890 the school in Wohldemfuerst was expanded to three rooms, with the teachers David Claassen and Johann Friesen demonstrating great energy, creativity and boldness. [340]

b) Significant changes took place in the leadership of the Kuban Church during this period. Brother Huebert's death could not exert further influence since he had already been a complete invalid for a long time. The absence of Br. Schmidt was felt all the more since his eyes failed him and made it necessary, quite contrary to his own inclination and custom to withdraw from active involvement, even before his death. Letters of those now bearing the responsibility mournfully mention how much they missed "the dear old brethren." Because of frailty and poor health due to old age, Br. Daniel Fast finally laid down all administrative responsibility in 1901, and Br. Cornelius Abram Wiens, the above-mentioned teacher, was elected as acting elder.

We include here some biographical data about the beloved and honored old man, Daniel Fast, who is now waiting only for the final call to come home. We have spoken of him especially in sections *51, 184,* and *188,* as well as in the chapters that deal with the Kuban Church. He was born in Halbstadt, Molotschna, Taurida, in 1826, where he attended the village school and secondary school for three and seven years, respectively. In the latter he was for some time a schoolmate of Peter J. Neufeld, Johann Claassen, and Bernhard Harder. In 1843 he became village school teacher in Tiegenhagen. He served in this capacity for nineteen years and then moved to Blumenort where he served as teacher, until the summer of 1864, when he joined the M.B. Church, a move which at that time automatically cost him his teaching position. In Wohldemfuerst he later served as teacher for a period of three years. In 1870 he was appointed minister of the M.B. Church in the Kuban Colony (earlier he had ministered for several years as deacon and "baptizer"). In 1877 he was ordained as elder by Huebert. Now he lives in quiet retirement. May life's evening be bright and warm for him! He has borne and loved much, and is much loved.

In 1895 the frequently-mentioned teachers, Johann J. Fast and Cornelius Abram Wiens, were ordained to the preaching ministry. The latter was, in January, 1905, ordained as elder by Elder David Schellenberg of Rueckenau. (In regard to direct calling and ordaining, i.e., the final recognition and confirmation, it must be said that the Kuban Church obeyed the apostolic word of I Tim. 5:22 beyond proper limits and to the detriment of its working force. Young men of thirty

years were regarded as big boys who could perhaps later grow up to become useful workers in the church! At the same time, those who thought and acted in this way had themselves taken matters into their own hands when they were twenty-five or thirty years old.) [341]

c) At present the active leadership consists of Elder Cornelius Abram Wiens, the Minister Johann J. Fast, the deacon Gerhard A. Wiens, and Johann Toews. (The Minister David Claassen, as we know, was appointed to the Halbstadt Secondary School in 1906.)

During the period here under discussion the widely-known Br. Jakob Giesbrecht died as well (about 1908). He was for many years a member of the M.B. Church council in the Kuban Colony, and also area administrative officer.

d) The M.B. Church of the Kuban has only one affiliate fellowship, namely at Grossfuerstental (Suvorovskaia) since 1899. It is situated near the Suvorovskaia Station on the Vladikovkas Railway. Postal Address: Suvorovskaia Vladikovkas. (Post office address: Suvorovskaia Vladikovkas District.) Here, a group of leasehold colonies was established by those of Sagradovka, Kuban, and other Mennonites—among them "Brethren"—on the land of the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievitsch.

The leaders of the group (about 1904) were the ministers Johann Voth (formerly a public school teacher) and Johann Neufeld, and the deacon, Gerhard Thiessen. . . .

§249

IV. *The Mennonite Brethren Church in Friedensfeld (Miropol) From 1885 to 1910*
Province and District of Ekaterinoslav
(Postal Address: Nikopol, Province of Ekaterinoslav, Miropol, Volost of Leschkarevo)

1. a) In the period here under discussion, this congregation, after a time of severe turbulence (see *#235* above), continued quietly and orderly, and in harmony with other churches of the conference, among which this church was fourth in order of origin. The Friedensfeld Church is the link between those churches which trace their origin to the Molotschna and those originating in Chortitza. The central village of Friedensfeld was founded by people from the Molotschna Colony. Through the migration of brethren from the villages and outlying settlements of Chortitza, the large church contains a majority of members of Chortitza origin, especially if the affiliated branches mentioned below are included. In the central village of Friedensfeld itself there reside some Baptist families who participate fully in the spiritual fellowship.

b) In the most recent period this church has lost through death

many brothers and sisters of significance who were believed to be indispensable. Br. Martin Thielmann died in 1889. He was an outstanding member because of his intelligence, zeal, and energy. As a youth [342] in Friedensfeld he had for several years been a student of Br. Peter Fast (in Taschtschenak; see *#51*, and sections on Ohrloff and Petrovka), and had especially exploited the latter's knowledge of the Russian language and put it to practical use. After his training in the Halbstadt Secondary School, he served for several years in Ekaterinoslav as superintendent of an aristocratic boarding school, especially in the training of students in the colloquial Russian language, which, together with a thorough theoretical knowledge, he had mastered to a degree which for that time was virtually unequalled among us. Following Br. Fast, M. Thielmann was himself teacher in Friedensfeld for a few years. Later he served for many years as village mayor in Friedensfeld, as controller of accounts and as presiding judge and area administrator of the Russian Volost of Leschkarevo to which the village of Friedensfeld (Miropol) belongs. In the local church, as well as in the conference, he was interested in all that went on and was always willing to serve. For a long time he was in the vanguard of the struggles mentioned above. In God's crucible of grace he was sanctified for heaven and the Lord took him away early. The itinerant minister, Dietrich Klassen of Jasykovo (see *#216*, 3), who for several years was a beloved neighbor in the village here and a co-worker in the ministry of the Word, also died here during the nineties. Br. Bernhard Dyck of Schoenau died during this period as well. He had been co-founder of the colony and deacon of the M.B. Church of Friedensfeld, most hospitable, always joyfully and expertly active, locally and in conference projects. He was, as was also his junior relative, Br. M. Thielmann, a "child" descendant of the "Kleine Gemeinde" (*#235*). His successor as deacon is Br. Peter Funk. In 1889, Br. Franz Peters passed away also. He was one of the group of young men of Tiege-Ohrloff that had experienced the revival in 1864-1866 with Abraham Schellenberg, Heinrich Friesen, and others. For many years he was a leading personality in the Friedensfeld Church as a missions enthusiast, contributor, and preacher with modest oratorical gifts but great warmth of heart. His daughter is the missionary-wife, Sister Anna Unruh, of India. From the ranks of the older settlers and residents several other brothers and sisters died during this period. Among these were the wife of Elder Jantz and her sister, the widow of Jakob Wiebe, nee Toews, of Fuerstenau; the widow of Peter Penner; the widow of Bernhard Dyck, nee Thielmann; the wife of preacher Heinrich Friesen, nee Helene Friesen. [343] Thus the complexion of the village and the Church of Friedensfeld changed quite drastically.

c) Elder Jakob Jantz, now a widower in his upper seventies, was, despite his age, until recently actively engaged as elder in his own

district and in the conference. He has been frequently mentioned in this work (see especially *#195-198, 235,* and *238,* annual report and travel report). Until very recently he still spent a couple of months of the year as itinerant minister. Now he, too, is aging and frail. In respect to the matter of the so-called "open communion," he and his congregation assume a mild and mediating position both in word and in practice. Here, too, Br. Abram Wall served for four years (at the close of the nineties) as school teacher and minister. He had been minister of the Mennonite Church in the Crimea (see "Spat" below); then he served as itinerant minister here, and now is residing in Miloradovka (see below). A minister alongside Br. Jantz, was Br. Heinrich Friesen of Tiege (one of the first residents of Friedensfeld, though not actually one of the founders of the young men's group mentioned above in connection with Franz Peters, and former student of Hermann Janzen in the Ohrloff Association School.) In his latter years he became even more active in the preaching of the Word at home and as an itinerant minister in winter, as did also his son, Heinrich Friesen, a local teacher.

d) This church, in the narrower sense of a local congregation, was always zealously concerned about its school. A considerable number of the youth have graduated from secondary school, especially from the one in Ohrloff and from the teacher-training course in Halbstadt. Sunday school, youth programs, and music and singing associations were cultivated here with love, zeal, and understanding. In the matter of singing and music, the family of Bernhard Dyck was especially prominent.

For a time, as a result of economic difficulties caused by the moving away of a number of co-owners of land, and by a series of poor crops around 1900, it seemed that the village would dissolve as a center of the "Brethren." Long since, however, this crisis has been overcome and, to our great joy, Friedensfeld has been solidly confirmed as a "village of brethren." God has added His blessing in terms of bounteous crops. Young families are moving from here to neighboring churches in Nepluiev and elsewhere, and are carrying with them an interest in culture and Christian warmth. May Friedensfeld blossom, and in increasing measure live up to its name ("Field of Peace") "until He comes" to establish His eternal kingdom of peace! In the period here dealt with, the church in the village of Friedensfeld (Miropol) erected a beautiful building with spacious meeting rooms for congregation and school.

2. The affiliated groups associated with the M.B. Church of Friedensfeld in the most recent period.

1) Nepluievo, since 1880 (see *#216* above) Postal Address: Nikopol, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Leadership (about 1905): Ministers, Heinrich Isbrandt Friesen, Peter Wiebe, Isaak Toews. Deacons (?).

Meetings alternated between the village-schools of Steinau and Blumenfeld; since 1905 the congregation owns a church building.

2) Novopodolsk (i.e., "Judenplan"), District of Kherson. Postal Address: Sofievka, Province of Kherson. In the Jewish colonies there lived a certain number of Mennonite "model farmers." Since 1888 an affiliate of the M.B. Church of Friedensfeld has existed here. Leadership (about 1905): Ministers, Franz Wieler (graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School, formerly the Association School, a brother of Gerhard and Johann Wieler); Kornelius Funk. Deacons: (?).

The congregation meets alternately in the homes of the brethren, and when possible in the Mennonite schools.

3) Steinfeld (on "Baratovsland" and "Schlachting") Province of Ekaterinoslav. Postal Address: Veseleie Ternu, Province of Ekaterinoslav. This was a group of five colonies of Chortitza Mennonites residing on purchased property. This M.B. Church affiliate has existed here since 1888. Leadership in 1905: Ministers, Franz Krause, Abram Neustaedter. Deacon, Peter Krause.

The congregation has its own meeting house.

4) Miloradovka and Schitlovo. Province of Ekaterinoslav, District of Verchnednieprovsk. Postal Address: Sorokopanovka. For Schitlovo: Boiedarovka, Province of Ekaterinoslav. This division of the Friedensfeld M.B. Church, existing since 1895, consists of Chortitza Mennonites who are land-owners (Miloradovka) and larger farms rented by Molotschna Mennonites. Leadership: Ministers, Abram Wall (see above), who was an itinerant minister, and Kornelius Janzen. Deacon, Br. Bergen.

The congregation has a church building.

V. *The Mennonite Brethren Church of Tiege (i.e., "Sagradovka") Volost of Ohrloff, District of Kherson, from 1885 to 1910* §250

(see above, *#235*, 2)

(Postal Address: Tiege, Province of Kherson)

1. The most significant external event for this congregation during the period being considered here is that the government closed the doors of the church in Tiege. The history of that event follows. When the Altenau Church building referred to in the foregoing section proved too small, it was decided to erect a new structure, and that in Tiege. At the same time the Mennonite Church (now "Nikolaifeld") had decided to erect a church building in the village of Nikolaifeld. Simultaneously, the

long-time area administrator of this volost, Reimer, undertook to seek permission from the government officials in Kherson for the erection of both buildings. The governor at that time, Erdeli, a very liberal and friendly man, and very favorably inclined towards Reimer and the volost, received him warmly. He immediately approved both building plans in principle, and assured Reimer that the formal documents would be prepared forthwith, and that the groups concerned should set about immediately to purchase materials and begin the building. What could be more natural than that both congregations joyfully went to work. The buildings were completed, dedicated and diligently used for their intended purpose. The formalities to approve the buildings were delayed, however. Erdeli relinquished his post, since the government no longer favored liberal-minded administrators who were tolerant in national and religious matters. New people took charge. Obsequious or ignorant officials (or both) presented the matter regarding the church buildings to the authorities in an attempt to put things "in the proper light." The Orthodox Consistory was approached, via the Archbishop of Kherson and Odessa. This took place at a time when a law which had been disregarded for a hundred years was being re-activated. It was a law having to do with applications for religious buildings submitted by Muslims, Jews, Protestants, and Catholics. What happened now was perhaps the grossest and most insulting chicanery which we Mennonites experienced in the nationalistic and reactionary period. (We do not want to call it persecution, because our Christianity had not reached a level where God would have honored us with that.) The local Orthodox provost ("Blagotschinny"), directed by the lesser leaders of the consistory, reported in documents that had been pushed under his pen for signature (though he was sincerely ashamed of them) that there would be grave danger for the Russian inhabitants of the village of Sagradovka (twelve versts distant) because they could be tempted by the "Stundism" if the Mennonites should conduct their (German!!) worship services in these church buildings. The Archbishop conveyed this concern to the governor, and several weeks prior to Pentecost in 1896, the police locked up both churches! Two church buildings for seventeen solidly Mennonite villages in a volost originally founded by Mennonites, consisting of 5,000 inhabitants whose religious rights had been clear and inviolable for a hundred years! And this because they had believed the verbal promise and advice of a provincial chief who had almost unlimited authority—a promise given as an official action and in the presence of his staff! The worship services of both churches now were held simultaneously in various village school buildings, changing from one location to another. This freedom, which the Mennonites had always exercised, was also taken from them but was soon restored by action of the Ministry of the Interior. And now something no less lamentable

occurred. Beginning with the first step in this matter, and long thereafter, according to the advice and direction of the former area administrator, Reimer, and the secretary, Fast, as well as the former Bergen, who was then the area administrator, the two church groups had made their presentations to the authorities as two Mennonite Church bodies, without indicating any difference between them. The leaders of both had signed the official documents together. The same practice was followed when, at the request of the M.B. Church of Sagradovka, P. M. Friesen came from Odessa in the summer of 1895 and found equally warm acceptance in both churches. The leadership of both churches immediately placed confidence in him. Secretary Bernhard Fast and Friesen prepared a petition to be presented to the government. It was based on the legislation relating to the Mennonites and on the statement of the Ministry of the Interior of March 6, 1880. This request was signed by the leadership of both churches (Nikolaifeld and Tiege) and, if we are not in error, the area administrative officials as well. When, however, the churches were closed in 1896, two prominent members of the Mennonite Church of Nikolaifeld were delegated to go to the Molotschna in order to seek advice and support. A very important man there, when he heard that the Mennonite Church had signed a petition jointly with the "Brethren," is said to "have been silent, but to have looked very critical and to have shrugged his shoulders" (precisely so!). In Sagradovka itself, there appeared a man who up to this point had not associated either with the "Brethren" or with the Mennonite Church, and who certainly did not have the confidence of the Mennonite leadership. This man was regarded as experienced in legal matters, and became the authorized agent for the Mennonite Church. In writing, and verbally, it was now stated that there existed a peculiar brotherhood. Somehow it was associated with the Baptist movement, and with "Stundists." The Mennonitism of the "Brethren" was questioned. All of this, of course, "without any unbrotherly intention." Even immersion was cited as putting the Mennonite identity of the Tiege Church in question. In St. Petersburg, an evangelical Christian of high standing, a retired admiral, Baron von Mirbach,[344] who had given such help as he could to the Sagradovka delegation, now began to raise questions. He asked if the group at home were living in peace. "Brethren," he said, "is there no ban among you!?" (We know this from a reliable Christian who was present.) Ultimately it was the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Petrovitsch Pobedonostzev, who decided the issue. He did so in the spirit of the request of the summer of 1895. (The details come from one who was present.) The Procurator found the whole thing absurd. In the late summer of 1898 both church buildings were opened on the same day through one and the same official order. Prior to this, a special investigation had been undertaken at Sagradovka by an officer assigned

by the regional government office on orders from higher authorities. (This was done with the help of the neighboring Lutheran pastor [!!] who was brought in as the expert. He proved useful to the "Brethren" because he had expertise in church history, and was unbiased.) In the presence of the officials of the Area Administrative Office authorities and the leadership of both churches, Nikolaifeld and Tiege, it was to be established whether the Tiege Church was indeed Mennonite. The official reported to the authorities that the so-called Mennonite Brethren Church was that branch of the Mennonites which sought with all zeal to restore the movement to the pure Mennonitism of the sixteenth century. In his zeal for this cause, he submitted the content of his findings for publication to the periodical, *Jug.-Kherson.* As had been said in cordial advice and warning to the administration of the Mennonite Church in the summer of 1895, and as had been understood and confirmed by the honorable elders at that time, Voth (in retirement) and Warkentin (active): damage and dishonor did not ultimately accrue to the M.B Church from this divided action against its own will. (Cf. *#214* and *240.*) The strange thing in this unpraiseworthy episode was that in this colony the relationship between the leadership of the two Mennonite fellowships around 1895-96 had been as cordial, and the official interchange between them as sensibly ordered, as perhaps nowhere else at the time.

2. No further materials have come to our attention about the inner life of the Tiege M.B. Church beyond the comprehensive report of the Minister Richert which we used in Section 235, 2. (What became of Br. Richert?) The M.B. Church of Tiege, or Sagradovka, considered in the narrower sense, exists and is active in the prosperous volost of Ohrloff, or the so-called Sagradovka Settlement, amid the sixteen well-grouped villages. Its members number approximately one-fifth of the population. A number of committed men serve as teachers of the Word and leaders of the Church, who, together with the congregation, seek to fulfill the will of God in faithfulness and in accordance with their best insights. This fellowship is more conservative in character (see *#198* and *244*) than the one in Friedensfeld (see *#249*, c). Yet, occasioned by the conference session of May, 1910 (approved by the Ministry of the Interior), the church in session rejected all thoughts of repression of the "free Brethren" and of the M.B. Church of Rueckenau, Molotschna, though such repression had been intended from several quarters. For many years the office of elder in this church was combined with that of the Friedensfeld Church. Succeeding Br. Jakob Richert, the now aging and ailing Br. Isaak Rgehr was for many years the acting elder. The Lord will abide with him, though his evening has come, until he is permitted to see the eternal morning! In June of 1902 Br. Johann Nickel was ordained by Br. Jantz of Friedensfeld as the elder of the now independent church of Tiege, Sagradovka. A relatively substantial

number of its members were, and still are, active as public school teachers of the settlement. Two of the "children" of the M.B. Church of Tiege are in foreign missionary service: Mrs. Abram Huebert in India, and Br. Heinrich Reimer, a graduate of the Hamburg Seminary, in the Cameroons of Africa.

3. The affiliated groups of the M.B. Church of Tiege, Sagradovka, within the latest time period:

1) Millerovo (i.e., "Don") since 190?. Donskaia District, region Taganrog. Postal Address: Millerovo, District of Donskaia. A group of Mennonite landowners, tenants, and industrialists.

Leadership around 1910: Minister, Wilhelm Dyck (see Jasykovo above). . . . Deacon: (?).

2) Alexeifeld, since 190?. Province and District of Kherson. Postal Address: Apostolovo, Province of Kherson.

Leadership (around 1908): Minister, Johann Thiessen. Deacon: (?).

3) Schenscharevo, since 190?. Where? Postal Address: Tatarka, Province of Kherson.

Leadership (about 1908): Minister, Peter Voth. Deacon: (?).

4) Novo-Nikolaifeld, since 190?. Province and District of Kherson. Postal Address: Tigenka, Province of Kherson.

Leadership (about 1905): Ministers, Jakob Epp, Abram Ratzlaff. Deacon: (?)

5) Durilino, since 190?. Where? Postal Address?

Leadership (about 1910: (?).

6) Trubetzkoie, since 1904. Province and District of Kherson. Volost of Kasatzkaia. Postal Address: Kazatzkoe, Province of Kherson.

Leadership: (?).

VI. *The Mennonite Brethren Church of Spat-Schoental, in the Crimea until 1910* §251

(See above *#229,* 2)

Postal Address for Spat: Sarabus, Province of Taurida.

Postal Address for Schoental: Kurman-Kemeltschi, Province of Taurida.

1. For details about the founding and the extension of this church we are indebted to Elder David Duerksen and Minister Jakob Kroeker. A report which they submitted in February of 1902 follows, abbreviated and supplemented, by generous permission of the authors.

In the year 1883-84 fairly large revivals occurred in the villages of Spat and Tokultschak and several other localities. Several persons in Spat had received an initial prompting toward their conversion during visits to the Molotschna, where the Lord at that time was bringing about great revivals through the work of several evangelists. Some of these evangelists also visited several localities in the Crimea where they preached the Word of the Cross and distributed tracts. Particularly effective were the following tracts distributed by the beloved brother Dr. Baedeker: "Instant Salvation," "The Savior and the Sinner," "Law and Grace," and others. The sermon of the Minister Johann Neufeld of Sagradovka on the text, "Prepare, O Israel, to meet thy God!," also exerted a powerful effect on a number of individuals. At this time, and shortly thereafter, a number of persons found forgiveness and peace through faith in the blood of the Lamb. At the time, too, the school teacher at Spat was a believer and a Mennonite minister. (Br. Abram Wall; see above in regard to Friedensfeld, Miloradovka.)

The new converts sought to guard and nurture their spiritual life by meeting in homes for mutual edification in addition to the regular worship services. These meetings often took place in "holy disorder," in part because of ignorance, and in part because of immediate needs; but these were hours of rich blessing, nevertheless. The Word was read and participants sought to explain it in child-like simplicity. For variation they also read expositions and devotional materials, as, for example, Spurgeon's sermons. "Of great blessing to all was the spontaneous telling of personal experiences of the grace of God." Such meetings often witnessed what the poet describes, "One says to others all around, In Jesus I my rest have found."

In the following winter a revival broke out among the children as well, and many were converted to the Lord. In the village of Hochheim (Naimann), too, a number of persons were converted to God at this time, largely through the admonitions of parents who had come to the faith during Pastor Wuest's ministry; for example, the aged Br. Andreas Voth. (See above *#83*, January 6, 1860, and "First Election of Ministers"; *#157*.)

Almost simultaneously, persons in Tokultschak and surrounding areas were being brought from death to life through the grace of God. Those who had come to new life in Hochheim (Naimann) and other places soon made contact with those in Spat and became more and more closely united; they also became acquainted with individual members of the M.B. Church who had come to the Crimea from the Molotschna and Sagradovka to take up residence in Saribasch, Temirbulat, and other localities. The fact that the close bond among these believers, and particularly the unusual nature of their meetings, was not understood by

others in the community, did not hinder the progress of the Kingdom of God. The believers continued to search the Word of God, whereby many of them came upon the "question of biblical baptism." When later they were visited by itinerant ministers of the M.B. Church, they raised this question with them, but were referred back again to the Scriptures with the words, "Read the Word of God diligently, and it will all be revealed to you." These ministers were acting appropriately, according to Mark 16:15, "Preach the gospel to the whole creation."

"With much prayer and determined searching, several of these believers soon came to the conviction that they must fulfill the obedience of faith and be baptized according to the example of Jesus (Matthew 3) and in accordance with the command of the Scriptures (Matthew 28; Acts 19:1-6). Upon their request, Br. David Schellenberg came to Spat in the spring of 1885, together with the brethren Wilhelm Loewen, Klaas Enns, and several other members of the M.B. Church of Rueckenau. Twenty-one of these believers were baptized by Elder David Schellenberg on April 28, and were received into the Church.

Thus, there was founded in Spat an affiliate of the Rueckenau M.B. Church. This group increased and multiplied, and soon felt the need to appoint brethren to the leadership and to the preaching ministry. Under the leadership of the Minister Johann P. Fast of Rueckenau, Br. Hermann Konrad and another brother were called to be ministers, and Br. Jakob Hiebert, Sr., was called to be deacon and to take care of the poor. In the fall of 1886 these brethren were ordained by Elder David Schellenberg in the presence of Elder Abraham Schellenberg of America. In Tokultschak and its surroundings the little group of those who had been baptized on their faith was led by Br. Heinrich Philippsen, who as a preacher of the M.B. Church of Sagradovka, had moved to the Crimea.

Attempts of the Adventists (Konradi, Perk) to gain entrance into the groups occasioned some disturbances but had no lasting effect.

Since the gatherings in Spat were constantly growing, the members soon felt the need for a suitable church building, and they laid the matter before the Lord in prayer. Although most of the brethren were poor, the Lord gave them the courage and joy to begin, with few resources, the erection of a building in the spring of 1885. Much of the work was done by the brethren locally, and the necessary funds were obtained through brethren outside the settlement at a minimal rate of interest. With God's help and blessing, the church was able to liquidate the debt in subsequent years. The task of acquiring official approval of the church building was assigned to Br. Peter M. Friesen and Br. Johann Philipp Isaak, and God gave grace so that it was granted by the governor in the spring of 1887. Construction was completed in the fall of that year, and the building was dedicated on October 11. Many came from near and far

to share with the brethren in their joy and gratitude to God.

At the same time Br. Franz Peters, minister of the M.B. Church in Altenau, Molotschna, came to Spat and served the church for two and one-half years in the proclamation of the Gospel. The brethren and sisters prayed to God for more workers because the fields had become large and "white unto harvest." On August 26, 1890, the brethren Abram Wall (teacher in Spat, formerly a Mennonite minister), Kornelius Boschmann and Daniel Friesen were appointed to the ministry of the Word, and on May 26, 1891, Kornelius Boschmann, Bernhard Friesen and Daniel Friesen were ordained by the two Elders, Br. David Schellenberg and Br. Daniel Fast (of the Kuban). In that same year, the Lord called the old Br. Philippsen away from his labors and transferred him into the kingdom of eternal rest. Soon more gaps appeared in the ranks of the leadership. The brethren Abram Wall, Daniel Friesen and Bernhard Friesen, after only a brief time of service, moved away from the Crimea to the North-East in order to serve the Lord there. A new worker was given to the church in Tokultschak and vicinity in the person of Br. Johann Rahn, who on March 10, 1894, was ordained as deacon.

In the year 1891 the need was felt to own a meeting place in the village of Tokultschak as well. The efforts to acquire governmental approval for the structure already built failed, however. Later, it was recognized that the Lord had guided in this entire matter, since already in 1893 many members from Tokultschak and vicinity moved further south and established several villages.

In spite of these migrations the number of those who joined the church "increased most encouragingly in these very years, 1890 to 1900, and the prayer for more laborers for the harvest again became urgent in the church." In 1894 the brethren Peter Goerzen, Jakob Hiebert, Jr., and Heinrich Janzen were assigned to the ministry of the Word, and Br. Johann Dick was appointed as deacon.

In the year 1895 Br. Abram Kroeker returned from Romania where he had served as preacher in the Baptist Church of Katalui for two years, and in the summer of 1897 Br. Jakob Kroeker returned to Spat after completing his theological studies in Hamburg. Of the above-mentioned brethren, Peter Goerzen and Heinrich Janzen (who had to withdraw from the office later) were ordained in Annovka on May 24, 1898, by Elder David Schellenberg, and the brethren Jakob Hiebert, Jr., and Jakob Kroeker in Spat, on May 25.

Shortly upon their return to the Crimea, the brethren Abram and Jakob Kroeker attempted to build the Kingdom of God through the publication of the *Christian Family Almanac Calendar,* as well as the Christian family periodical, *Friedensstimme* (beginning in 1903), and

other devotional publications. "The Lord guided the work of Christian literature-distribution by His grace." [From this modest beginning emerged the large and expanding publishing house and press, "Raduga," in Halbstadt, Taurida, founded in 1908.]

On August 27, 1899, the church in the Crimea had the joy of ordaining Br. Heinrich Unruh upon the completion of his theological studies in Hamburg, and his wife (Anna, daughter of Franz Peters of Friedensfeld) as missionaries, and sending them to India. A few years later, they delegated the brother of the above, Cornelius Unruh (also a graduate of the seminary in Hamburg) and his wife (Martha, nee Wolltmann) for the same work. "To God be the glory for the work-force in the Kingdom of God at home and abroad." Still, the church does not have surplus workers, for because of the branching out of the churches in Spat, Baschlitscha, Annovka, and Tokultschak, and their respective districts—some twenty-five localities in all (1902)—there is need for more servants.

Until 1899, the M.B. Church in the Crimea was an affiliate of the church in Rueckenau. As early as 1890 the need was felt for a brother to replace Br. Hermann Konrad as leader of the group since he was becoming increasingly hard-of-hearing. The church prayed to God about this matter. In the year 1897 Br. David Duerksen (see above, *#227*) responded to the call of the church in the Crimea and moved from Margenau, Molotschna, to Schoental in the Crimea. The church committed the leadership to him, and on May 23, 1899, he was confirmed as elder of the Spat M.B. Church by the Elders Br. Aron Lepp and Br. David Schellenberg. In the spring of 1900, after an extended period of service, Br. Johann Friesen was ordained as minister and Br. Johann Dick as deacon. Later, also the brethren Abram Klaas Kroeker and Dietrich Doerksen were assigned to assist in the proclamation of the Word, while Br. Isaak Dick was appointed deacon.

"Though in the course of time it had to contend with not a few distressing experiences and church problems, the church stands today (1902) as a monument to the grace and faithfulness of God. The church consists of some 140 families, 330 members, a total of about 810 adherents, and seeks to build itself up through the Sunday worship and the weekly Bible study and prayer meetings. Over the years, the following have been called into being in various localities and have been sustained by the grace of God: choirs, young men's and young women's organizations, work associations [women's groups for mission purposes], and Sunday schools. May the Lord, who began this work on the Crimea peninsula [not only in the form of the M.B. Church, but previously and concurrently also in various forms in both of the Mennonite churches] and who has sustained it, bring it to completion according to His good

pleasure! To Him be honor and glory eternally!" So far basically the brethren Duerksen and Kroeker.

2. Of the above-mentioned ministers of the Word, the brethren Abram and Jakob Kroeker moved away to Neu-Halbstadt[345] in 1905 in order to be near the printing press in the interests of their publishing activity. In 1905 in Schoental (twelve versts distant from the Kurman-Kemeltschi Station where Elder David Duerksen had lived since 1897), a large church structure was erected so that in actuality the center of the M.B. Church in the Crimea has shifted to Schoental. It is a joy for us to say that the brethren in the Crimea participate with devotion and zeal in Mennonite education. The brethren David Duerksen and Jakob Kroeker were active members (now?) in the commission consisting of elders and ministers entrusted with the instruction and examination of religion and the German language. Also, the members of the M.B. Church participate, by way of advising, assisting, and contributing, in the sudden and successful establishment and support of the two new Mennonite high schools in the Crimea (1905 in Karassan, and 1906 in Spat). The initiative in founding a girls' high school came essentially from the Mennonite Brethren Church.[346] The brethren, as in other areas, are represented in the teaching staff of the Crimean Mennonites. The generosity of this church in regard to all worthwhile spiritual and other causes seems exemplary to us. It was probably the first Mennonite church, at least in Taurida, to come to the aid of the government when, in 1904, it made a substantial contribution to the Red Cross for war needs. It is keen in the pastoral care of members and in church discipline. This young and not very large M.B. Church, at whose head stands one of our formerly prominent elementary school teachers (at present, January, 1910, Br. David Duerksen is unfortunately seriously ill[347]), has placed a large percentage of young men in the ranks of our intellectual and spiritual workers. Besides the two Kroeker brethren, and the above-mentioned missionaries, Heinrich and Cornelius Unruh, there must be mentioned here the brothers of the latter, Abraham Unruh (graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and the Halbstadt teacher-training course), teacher and preacher, formerly of the Crimea, now in Barvenkovo (see above, Petrovka-Naumenko), and Benjamin Unruh (graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School, the Halbstadt teacher-training course, and the evangelical seminary in Basel, Lic. th. from the University of Basel, at present instructor of religion and the German language in the Mennonite Business School in Halbstadt). A number of other young men, and women, are studying in a variety of institutions.

3. Questions which have troubled and still plague the church, are the question of marriage and the question which at present is disturbing all M.B. Churches, namely that of "open communion." The first of these

has been finally settled in the church of Einlage and the Molotschna in the spirit of sections *212* and *241*, 6. The second is, as elsewhere in the M.B. Church, still pending. The stance of the church in the Crimea is mildly conservative, as is also that of its elder. The question regarding the Baptists (*#201, 211,* etc.) was a very sensitive one here, because a small Baptist Church in the Crimea could not achieve a regulated leadership for a long time. Now, praise God, the little "half sister" (the designation is not used in the same sense as the great Elder and Chief Shepherd uses it!) is independently organized, the church is led by its own ordained elder, Br. Eisemann, who has been confirmed by the government. Now this church need no longer trouble the sister M.B. Church for services of love, such as baptism, solemnization of marriages, etc. The relationship promises to become more a pleasant one because of the present equality. The perfect law of brotherly love, according to Rom. 12:10, Gal. 3:28, and I Pet. 1:22, has not remained untarnished here, and the judging Shepherd will have to censure here as well. It is remarkable that the excellent report above does not refer to this group of "believing and baptized children of God" with as much as one single word!

4. This group does not have branch groups in the sense of affiliates. All groups together form one compact church with two centers where major meetings are held. These centers are Schoental, which has a building with a seating capacity of 600 (and could be increased considerably with the removal of several walls), and Spat, with an older and smaller structure. The other groups are Annovka (with a school building that serves as a meeting house), Baschlitschna, and Tokultschak. The leadership of this church consisted (about 1905) of the following: Elder David Duerksen (formerly a public school teacher), Abram Klaas Kroeker, Jakob Hiebert, Dietrich Doerksen, Peter Klassen (graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School, formerly a public school teacher); deacons: Jakob Hiebert, Johann Dick, Johann Rahn.

VII. *The Mennonite Brethren Church of Kotliarevka (i.e. Memrik)* §252

Province of Ekaterinoslav, District of Bachmut
(Postal Address: Shelannaia, Province of Ekaterinoslav)

1. Our information about the origin and the life of this group of brethren comes from their elder, Br. Isaak Fast, who died in 1909. (He was the son of the well-known Peter Fast, preacher at Taschtschenak, Friedensfeld, who died in Naumenko.) The report was written in February, 1902; we are using the report freely, with some additions from other sources. The mother church of the Molotschna (volosts of Halbstadt

and Gnadenfeld) purchased property for the landless among them in the District of Bachmut at Memrik. Among the settlers who migrated there were also some twenty-eight families from the Rueckenau M.B. Church. Among these were the brethren Isaak Fast, who two years earlier had been selected as minister of the Word, and Jakob Doerksen (now assistant elder), who had been assigned to the deacon ministry. In the fall of 1885 the brethren Franz Nickel and Wilhelm Loewen, on behalf of Elder David Schellenberg, arranged what was necessary for them to function as an affiliated church group. The brethren Isaak Fast and Jakob Doerksen were confirmed as ministers, Br. Aron Friesen as deacon, and the above-mentioned Isaak Fast was entrusted with the leadership. When in the fall of 1885 each settler had erected his own shelter, the meetings could be held in homes by turn according to a prepared list (as was the custom in the Molotschna) in the ten villages, even though the buildings were rather small. Until then the meetings had been held in sheds and mud huts. The Lord acknowledged His little flock, which lived together in peace and love, and soon it became apparent that God was "building Zion." Sinners were converted and by baptism were added to the church, so that by New Year's of 1886 there were already thirty-five members. One year later the number had increased to fifty-two. The year 1887 was one of special blessings, agriculturally, for the District of Bachmut. The homes, the majority of which were small, could not nearly accommodate the congregation at the Sunday services, and many persons were, therefore, forced to stay away. It was generally recognized that a meeting house was necessary if the entire cause was not to suffer. But how to acquire one? That was the important question. In a wonderful way the Lord provided in this regard. A merchant owned a house at the end of the village of Kotliarevka. The house measured seven and one-half by four fathoms. He offered to sell it to the church. This was regarded as an answer to prayer. But where was the congregation to obtain the necessary 1,000 rubles? That was the second big question. Though the church did not have the necessary resources, the Lord provided (through a loan from the building fund of the Rueckenau Church; see *#224*). Thus, the house with one dessiatine of land was purchased, and the building was furnished and dedicated in that same year. The church rejoiced greatly and was thankful to the Lord to own a building which they believed would be adequate since it seated 400 persons. But the little group grew steadily, and with the increase in numbers there was an increase in work, the more so because there was no dearth of difficulties in the church. However, Jesus, the good Shepherd, provided workers for the work. In 1888, Br. Jakob Wiens (now of Tschunaievka, near Omsk) was confirmed as minister and the brethren Aron Friesen and Heinrich Fehdrau as deacons. The Lord visibly blessed the proclamation of the Gospel, locally and especially also

through ministers of sister-churches who occasionally came on visits to the great joy of the church. Because the church increased year by year, in number and in strength, it soon became apparent that the meeting house was too small. Also the church had been informed by the local authorities that they did not have government approval. Thus the church agreed in 1892, having reached a membership of 213, to apply to the government for the approval of a plan for a new meeting house. The brethren Jakob Wiens and Jakob Braeul, who were commissioned to represent the church, received a negative response together with a threat that the present meeting place might be closed. This was a difficult time for the church! However, the members sought to fortify themselves in the prospect that even greater difficulty might strike them, convinced that the Lord would carry forward the work which He had begun. Considerable animosity was expressed against the church. Finally, in November, 1896, the church building in Kotliarevka was closed by the police. (See above, "Sagradovka." What happened here was a part of the same movement against those of other faiths as was the disruption of the annual meeting of the church in Rueckenau in 1895, and the episode regarding the Einlage Church. Cf. *#214* and *241,* 2.) The church, whose membership had reached 330, was required to meet for Sunday worship in three different locations. Accompanied by much prayer and petition to God, the church decided after much deliberation to ask the brethren Isaak Fast and Jakob Braeul to present a new plan to the government officials in Ekaterinoslav, with a renewed request to be permitted to erect a church structure. God helped wonderfully: within two months the new building was approved, and exactly two months after the old building had been closed, on January 11, 1897, it was re-opened by the chief of police. The congregation moved in on that same day and joyfully sang songs of gratitude and praise. On September 14, 1897, the new building was opened. Many brothers and sisters from near and far participated, as did many guests. The building, which could accommodate 800, was too small for the dedication celebration. Blessed was the proclamation of the Word! The church was now able to meet in peace and quiet, and was particularly grateful to the government (for which it prayed regularly in the worship services) that it had decided in their favor. There were trials and times of spiritual drought, to be sure, but the Lord always proved to be a helper. September 11, 1900, was a day of special blessing. The church, which until this time had been an affiliate of the Rueckenau Church, now became independent. Br. Isaak Fast was ordained as elder. The brethren Franz Froese and Peter Rempel (formerly student at St. Chrischona, for a time preacher in the Baptist Church of Girardov, now for several years itinerant minister of the M.B. Conference in North America) were ordained as ministers. In 1894 Br. Jakob Enns had been confirmed as deacon. The Lord is standing by the church with His help,

as He did in the past, and will not let it suffer lack of any good thing. Sunday schools, choirs and youth programs offer the youth much opportunity for good. This is how Br. Fast concludes his report: "The ways which the Lord chooses to go with His people are amazing, but He brings all things to a wonderful conclusion and crowns His people with grace and mercy. This is the experience of the M.B. Church of Memrik in every respect, and we are encouraged to erect an Eben-Ezer—Hitherto has the Lord helped us!"

2. In May of 1902, the church at Memrik, together with the affiliated group to be mentioned below, numbered 350 persons, of whom five were active public school teachers. By 1904 two members of this church had studied theology at St. Chrischona: Peter Rempel and Gerhard Berg.

3. The leadership of the central church of Memrik in the ten villages of the settlement of the same name were the following brethren (about 1905): elder: Isaak Fast (died 1909); ministers, Jakob Doerksen, Abram Neustaedter, Franz Froese, Gerhard Berg . . . ; deacons: Heinrich Fehdrau, Jakob Enns, Aron Friesen . . . .

4. Branch groups affiliated with the M.B. Church of Memrik:

1) Alexandropol, Province of Ekaterinoslav, District of Bachmut (Postal Address: Otientino, Province of Ekaterinoslav). Situated about thirty versts from Kotliarevka, on land purchased in the village of Alexandropol and vicinity. Founded after 1888 by Mennonites of whom about fifteen families were M.B.'s, including the Minister Jakob Wiens (now elder in Siberia) and Deacon Jakob Rogalsky of Memrik. After these two moved away, the brethren Franz Goossen and Kornelius Isaak were confirmed as ministers and Br. Jakob Isaak as deacon. Since the number of members increased sharply (in 1892 there were eighty), a meeting-place was erected in 1893 which could seat 400 persons. This building was also closed by the police in 1901, but was re-opened in the same year.

Leadership (about 1905): ministers Franz Goossen, Kornelius Isaak; deacon: Jakob Isaak.

2) Nikolaipol, since 1903. Donskaia District. Postal Address: Matveev-Kurgan, District of Donskaia.

Leadership (about 1908): minister: Jakob Wiebe; deacon: (?).

3) Masaievka, since 1900. A colony on rented land. Donskaia District. Postal Address: Bolsche-Kreperskoe, District of Donskaia.

Leadership (about 1908: minister: Abraham Petkau; deacon: (?).

4) Kameschlak, since (?). Where (?). Postal Address: (?).

Leadership: (?).

5) Steintal-Voronzovka, since 1904. Province of Ekaterinoslav. Postal Address: Sherevetz, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Leadership (about 1908): minister: Jakob Rogalsky; deacon: (?).

VIII. *The Kamenka Mennonite Brethren Church in the Chortitza*[348] *Settlement from 1894 to 1910* §253

Province and District of Orenburg
(Postal Address: Pokrovskoie,
Province of Orenburg)

1.This is the first independent church which has branched off from the Einlage Church, apart from the churches in the Kuban and in Friedensfeld, in which members of the Einlage Church were more or less well represented. Our report concerning the origin of this church and its way of ordering its affairs is based on an account prepared by the brethren Jakob Heide, Jakob Toews, Hermann Neufeld and Abram Teichrew, at the request of the church, on January 28, 1902. In 1894, the Chortitza Volost bought 25,000 dessiatines of land in the Orenburg District for its landless people. During the years 1894-1901, 14 villages were gradually established on this land—brethren who wished to resettle also attended the consultative meetings called by the Chortitza Volost administration regarding this matter. In these meetings, in addition to addressing themselves to the "miscellaneous" items on the agenda, some persons suggested that the brethren settle in a village by themselves. However, the late area administrator, Froese, declared: "Here there are no 'brethren' but only settlers." On March 17, 1894, eighty families, the first group of settlers gathered at the station in Alexandrovsk. (Eight days later a second train left with about fifty families.) Before the train left, the brethren, together with those who had come to see them off, knelt to thank God for all His goodness and to pray for His protection on the way. "The last signal was given, the last good-bye's spoken, and soon we had disappeared from their view but not out of their hearts." On the journey not all went according to their wishes; they encountered many difficulties. When the settlers left their homes, it was the beginning of seeding time. About two-thirds of the way to their destination, they met some snow and increasingly they encountered winter. "Many became unhappy." The train arrived at their destination, Platovka, on March 25, and on the 26th the settlers reached the village Pokrovka. From here they were taken by Russian sleds to their place of settlement, 60 versts away. This was no pleasure trip. The snow began to melt and often the sleds upset as they slipped off the built-up roads. Children had to be held lest they should fall out of the

sleds. Brother and Sister Neufeld had a sick child which died on the way from Pokrovka, in a village of the Bashkirs, Konakbai. "These people would not let us stay in their homes when they saw that the child was deathly ill. The pain of this experience will remain unforgettable." The settlers looked for lodging on the estates and in the villages. They had to wait a whole month before they could begin the work on the land. Until then there were blizzards and the temperature dropped to 25 below. This was a harsh welcome for the new arrivals. Many had to suffer much from the weather; the possessions of many were thoroughly soaked because of the poor accommodation, and a variety of sicknesses were encountered. Many prayers and cries ascended to God out of the depths of their hearts. A few returned immediately to their former homes. With joy the settlers finally saw the snow disappear. Now they went to work on the land. As soon as the seed was in the ground, the village plans were surveyed and laid out. Each settler drew a lot and thus received a piece of land on which he could establish his temporal home. Huts, "Semlianki" (sod shacks), were now built and also a few houses. "The spiritual prospects were poor. Altogether there were thirty-five members of the Mennonite Brethren Church scattered over the five villages which were established in the first year. We met in our huts and sought to edify ourselves according to I Thess. 5:11 and I Peter 2:5." Sometimes they all came together from the five villages to strengthen their faith. "Sometimes we were soaked in our huts, but we were happy and rejoicing in the Lord." The first harvest was good, but the settlers could not get much benefit from it. The snow came early and much of the grain remained in the fields under the snow. "But the Lord cared for us." In the first year two people asked for baptism. Because there was no minister with the brothers and sisters, they wrote a letter to the Mennonite Brethren in the Molotschna settlement, in the Province of Samara (see above, #242, 4). From there, the brethren Daniel Friesen (formerly Crimea) and Jakob Fast, both of whom lived about seventy-five versts away, came and baptized the two and received them into the membership of the church. At the same time they also observed communion and foot-washing and enjoyed great blessing. "In this way things went on under God's blessing until 1895." Then the brethren, Elder Aron Lepp and the ministers Kornelius Fehr and Wilhelm Dyck arrived to conduct an election of ministers. The brethren Johann Epp and Jakob Heide were elected to serve as ministers and Jakob Toews and Hermann Neufeld as deacons. The ordination was held on June 12. At the same time, five more persons were baptized. "When the brethren left us we remained behind, inexperienced in the Kingdom of God; often we were afraid, but the Lord did not leave us nor forsake us. His Spirit taught us according to His promise." The mother church helped the congregation in many requests for advice in spiritual as well as in

temporal affairs, and stood by them with fatherly counsel and help. In the latter year they were granted grace to buy a lot for 150 rubles in the village of Kamenka, on which to build a church building. "In temporal things—after a poor crop in 1896 we now are quite well off (1902). We are always able to thresh our grain before the winter comes. The mother colony has had much patience with us in our payments, because we are all, so to say, poor. They only asked from us what we could pay. The mother colony has done much for the poor in providing gifts of money and clothing. In the first year we were to buy expensive seed grain, but they gave the grain to us without money. This was a great help. They also gave us a generous grant to build our schools and when horses were frequently stolen, they shared with us so people could again buy horses." In the spiritual realm, the Lord had begun to bless and He continued to do so. "In the spring of 1898 we experienced what Jeremiah speaks of, Jer. 33:14. A great awakening began and our meetings became so large that our houses could hardly accommodate them. We were able to manage, though, until spring and then we went into the hay barns which were packed to the last seat. On our knees we often said to the Lord: 'Lord, where shall we get bread for so many.' But the Lord has always provided; He is rich enough to feed thousands, even when we have no prospects. We have experienced that." In winter they needed room. The brethren brought this need before the Lord, and the village assembly permitted them to use the school building, built in 1897, whenever it was not in use. In this year the brethren began to work for ratification of their plan to build a church and were granted this. The brethren and sisters prayed for the means to build and these came according to the promise of Psalm 145:19. On September 15, 1900, this church was dedicated to God, with great blessing experienced by all. The church had grown to be large. Many had been baptized, especially in 1897 (32 persons) and 1899 (25 persons) and others also every year. In addition, new arrivals came from the home church. Because of this, the church sensed a special need for an experienced leader. The Lord made Brother and Sister Kornelius Fehr (see above, Jasykov) willing to come and to "dedicate their lives to the Lord and to the church to the end" after declining the invitation for two years (1900). On the recommendation of the general meeting of the year before and in response to the wish of the church in Kamenka, the brethren Aron Lepp and Hermann Neufeld came to ordain Brother Fehr as elder of the now independent church of Kamenka. The ordination was held on June 17, 1900 "and the words of Psalm 5:13 were fulfilled." "Because the field of labor was great" the Lord granted new workers. The brethren Jakob Toews, previously ordained to serve as deacon, Jakob Friesen and Gerhard Neufeld were ordained to the teaching ministry, and Brother Heinrich Esau as a deacon on September 16, 1900. In that year, 30 persons were baptized.

Thus the Lord has continued to build His Kingdom with great blessing. Even though at the beginning our future seemed to be dark, the Lord has gloriously provided."

In January 1902, the church had 176 members. Since then eight years have passed. For these years we have no specific records. The year 1906/1907 was an economically depressed year. But again we found that the Chortitza Volost gave strong and many-sided assistance.

2. The leadership in 1902 consists of: Elder, Kornelius Fehr. Mininsters: Johann Epp, Jakob Heide, Jakob Toews, Jakob Friesen, Gerhard Neufeld, Abram Teichrow . . . . Deacons: Hermann Neufeld, Heinrich Esau.

§254

IX. *The Nikolaievka Mennonite Brethren Church (Ignatievo) from 1889-1910*

Province of Ekaterinoslav, District Bachmut
Postal Address: New York, District of Bachmut

We report somewhat freely from a detailed letter written by Br. Hermann Neufeld, presently elder of the church, dated April 1904. In 1888, the Chortitza Volost bought the estate Ignatievo for those who had no land. This estate was in the District of Bachmut. In 1889 six villages were established here. The main centers here are New York where the Mennonite Church and also the secondary school are located and Nikolaievka, which is the center of the Mennonite Brethren Church and also has a secondary school, established primarily on the initiative of the "brethren." One piece of this land was set aside to provide a reserve or fund to care for the landless people in the future. Nikolaievka, right from the beginning, was settled primarily by members of the Mennonite Brethren Church. The Nikolaievka Church, now independent, was formerly an affiliate of the Einlage Church and now includes in its membership the brothers and sisters who live in the three villages of the adjacent Chortitza settlement, Borissovo. Although spiritual workers who had been called were lacking, "the little group built itself up into a spiritual house" and soon the brethren Abraham Paetkau, Kornelius Gronau, Paul Wiebe and Johann Schellenberg (school teacher), were called to serve as ministers. From this group, sooner or later, Brother Gronau moved to America and the brethren Paetkau and Schellenberg moved to Naumenko. To make up for this, the Lord led Brother Peter Wiebe to this church. He was appointed to the ministry of the Word along with Br. Hermann Neufeld, Sergeievka, (already known to us as preacher and itinerant minister in the church of Einlage) who became convinced, in the fall of 1892, that he should devote his full time to a spiritual ministry. Accordingly, when the church of Ignatievo, with the approval of all the affiliated groups of the Einlage Church, called him to serve as leading

minister whenever he was not involved in his itinerant ministry, he accepted and moved to Nikolaievka. The church grew through the addition of converts; and the Lord also gave new ministers of the Word. So it happened that at a great thanksgiving festival in the fall of 1893, the brethren Peter Wiebe and David Block were ordained as ministers and Paul Wiebe and John Siemens as deacons. Elder Lepp and Minister Hermann Neufeld served at the ordination. During this time several Mennonite Brethren, together with some members of the Mennonite Church, bought some land in the neighborhood of Nikolaievka and established the village of Feodorovka. The members of the Mennonite Brethren Church in this village were also members of the affiliated Ignatievo-Nikolaievka Church. Troubled times also came to this church in that some members lived and acted carelessly and superficially. These were dealt with repeatedly and finally had to be excommunicated. Another source of trials were the Adventist ministers who "seemed to do much damage, especially attacking and ridiculing ministers and fellow-workers openly." Some of the members transferred to the Adventists; others had to be "denied fellowship because they promoted the teaching of the Adventists and became opponents of the M.B. Church." This went on till about 1896. "But in the midst of these difficult times, the Lord comforted his people in that souls were awakened and converted." At Pentecost, 1898, twenty-five persons were baptized and that same year several other baptisms were held. Three new brethren, Wilhelm Klassen, Heinrich Neufeld and Peter Krause were inducted into the work of the church. Soon another time of trouble arose; a number of young members, "in whom the seed had not fallen on good soil (Matt. 13:19-23)," to the great sorrow of the church, had to be excommunicated after many admonitions, warnings and prayers. Another visitation came when several brethren, along with some members of the Mennonite Church, agreed among themselves that they would not repay the Chortitza mother colony (volost), all the money they had received for land purchase, because the money had originally come from the treasury for the "landless." "Finally, after several discussions and consultations had been held, the Lord answered the prayers of His children and helped them. Those who would not accept admonition were excommunicated. The inner oneness and peace that came as a result of this convinced the church that the Lord was gracious to them. Every year the church was able to welcome to the fellowship of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, those who had been newly saved." To begin with, the church held its services in the school in Nikolaievka, which, in anticipation of such use had been built somewhat larger by the brethren. However, because a number of members of the Mennonite Church also moved to this village, the practice of alternating services was established. On the Sunday that the Mennonite Church used the school, the brethren met in the somewhat smaller school in Ignatievo; "this also

the church considered a blessing." In 1901, the aging brother, Aron Lepp, withdrew from his office as elder. At this point the affiliated church, Nikolaievka-Ignatievo suggested that together with the affiliated sister church, Petrovka-Naumenko, they form an independent church. However, because the latter congregation did not concur, they mutually agreed to be "affiliates" or "stations" of the Einlage Church. But each congregation would have its own seal and its own church records (church membership book, register of civil classification). In the later years, until 1904, there was a great decrease in the membership of the church. Many families moved away; some left for America. Even Br. Hermann Neufeld felt that he should emigrate and had already arranged to take over a farm in Canada. We rejoice that the Lord led him in a different way. Today he is still at his assignment as leading minister in Nikolaievka and (already more than 20 years) itinerant minister of the M.B. Church in Russia. After several ministers and deacons left in 1904, the church had as ordained leaders: ministers, Hermann Neufeld, Peter Wiebe, David Block and Wilhelm Klassen and deacon Kornelius Krause and the following ministers-elect: Peter Siemens (former public school teacher), Kornelius Neustaedter, Johann Siemens (former public school teacher), Johann Lettkemann, Peter Janzen (called 1902), and Peter Janzen (called 1904) and deacons-elect: David Neufeld and Peter Sawatzky. Three members served as public school teachers and four members were former teachers. The church has its meeting place in Nikolaievka.

The Ignatievo-Nikolaievka Church became an independent church in January 1905 and Br. Hermann Neufeld was ordained to serve as elder by Br. Gerhard Regehr, elder of the Einlage M.B. Church.

§255 X. *The Tschunaievka M.B. Church* (-*"Siberia"*)
See above #242, 7-11.

§255(2) XI. *The Talma M.B. Church* (-*"Terek"*)
See above #242, 12.

§255(3) XII. *The Lugovsk M.B. Church* (-*"Neu-Samara"*)
See above #242, 4.

§255(4) XIII. *The Gortschakovka M.B. Church* (-*"Ufa"*)
See above #242, 5.

§255(5) XIV. *The Karagui-Kamyschevo M.B. Church* (-*"Molotschna-Orenburg"*)
See above #242, 6.

NB! Up to this point we have dealt with the churches chronologically, that is, according to the date of their origin. The next three are dealt with outside their chronological sequence because of their exceptional geographic locations and even more particularly because the story of their origins and existence is so exceptional.

XV. *The Deutsch-Wymyschle M.B. Church in Russian Poland from 1884 to 1910* §256

Province of Warsaw and other locations.
(Postal Address: Gombin)

We already took note of the beginning of an M.B. Church in Russian Poland above (see #131, c). However, most of these early Mennonite Brethren formally joined the Baptist churches. But two decades later, a small group of persons of Mennonite origin and with Mennonite privileges, coupled with a strong Mennonite doctrinal orientation and an even stronger commitment to baptism by immersion, sought to establish contact with the Mennonite Brethren churches in South Russia. The first baptisms were held here in 1884. Repeatedly they invited ministers to visit them and Elder Jakob Jantz, Friedensfeld and Minister Wilhelm Dyck (now in Millerovo) made frequent trips in response to these invitations. On Nov. 4, 1895, Elder Jantz (according to a report written by him) ordained the following: Br. Peter Ratzlaff as elder and Br. Johann Kliewer as co-elder and Br. Heinrich Wohlgemut as deacon. Br. P. Ratzlaff made frequent visits to the M.B. churches in the South and East in Russia as guest minister and conference participant. A brief report written by him in 1902 is extant (in addition to one written by Elder Jantz). A rather strange error was made in certain annual statistical information in that the name and address of Elder Ratzlaff appeared in the list of ministers instead of in the list of elders. Membership in 1908 stood at ninety, with 139 adherents.

XVI. *The Mariental Mennonite Brethren Church (old Samara) from 1886 to 1910* §257

Province and District Samara
(Postal Address: Samara, Volost Alexandertal,
Village Mariental)

According to a brief report by Br. Jakob Epp, minister of this church (formerly a minister of the Alexandertal M.B. Church) written in 1902, the earliest beginings of this small church can be dated 1883. (In a statistical report of the M.B. Church, the year of origin is set at 1890, but in the general statistical report of the Mennonite brotherhood, written by Minister Heinrich Dirks, Jr., in 1905, the date 1886 is named which is probably correct as the date of formal organization.) At

Pentecost, 1883, a certain Brother Johann Hein travelled to the Molotschna and was baptized in Rueckenau. Visits were requested and the following brethren came in response: Br. Johann Wieler, also Br. Johann Kargel, then Jakob Reimer and David Schellenberg and others. In 1887, Brother Heinrich Ewert, Sr., a minister of the Alexandertal Mennonite Church, joined the M.B. Church in the Molotschna and was recognized as a minister of the M.B. Church at a conference in Friedensfeld in 1888. However, he died in April 1889. The writer of this report had already been baptized in 1888 and having been called to come south, was inducted as a worker at Jasykovo, August 1889. Almost every year there were additions to the church. In 1894 the school teacher, Gerhard Claassen, formerly a teacher in Margenau, Molotschna, a graduate of the Halbstadt Pedagogical Institute (now a minister of the Davlekanovo M.B. Church) came to serve here (at Old Samara) as minister of the M.B. Church until 1900. After this, Br. Peter Koehn (former student at St. Chrischona) came from the Molotschna M.B. Church. He served here as appointed minister until 1907, partly supported by the M.B. General Conference and partly by the small local church. From the report we can see that this church distinguished itself by its readiness to give sacrificially. Br. Koehn went to Waldheim, Molotschna, in 1907. Sometime, during the time span mentioned, Br. Johann Wiebe, a former elder of the Mennonite Church, joined the Mariental congregation, after he had vainly attempted, over a long period of time, to structure practices in his church in conformity with his convictions. Our reporter, Br. Jakob Epp, died in 1903 (?). Brother Johann Isaak had been ordained as minister in 1905. Since then he has already been serving for some time in the Gortschakovka M.B. Church (Province of Ufa). Since 1887 this congregation has its own church building in the village of Mariental (later this was enlarged). Membership in 1905 stood at 48; with adherents the total was 98. The only person definitely known to be in the leadership at present (1910) is the above mentioned Br. Johann Wiebe. In 1905, Br. Cornelius Wiebe was deacon and had been since 1901. It is not clear from the report whether the Mariental M.B. Church is an independent church or an affiliate of the Rueckenau-Molotschna Church (the latter is hardly conceivable).

§258

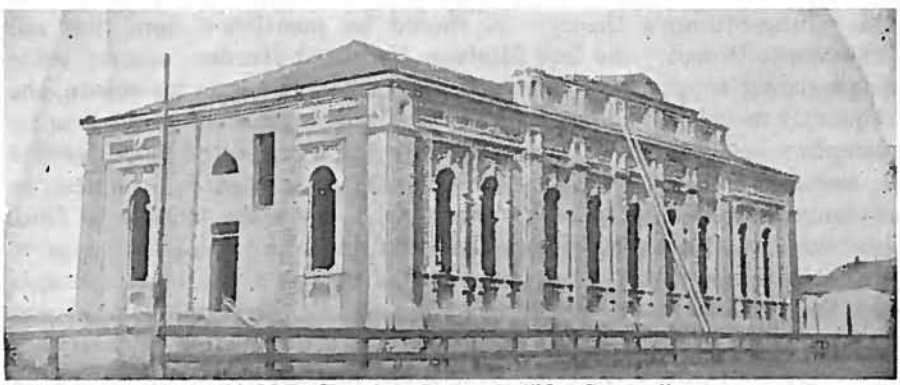
XVII. *The Nikolaipol M.B. Church in Russian Turkestan from 1887 to 1910*

(Postal Address: Aulie-Ata, Syrdarienskoe District)

This church came into being as the result of a so-called "Exodus" which began among the Molotschna people and was particularly strong in the Volga colony, Koeppental parish, in the 70s and 80s of the last



a) M.B. Church Nikolaipol in Andreievka, Russian-Turkestan.



b) M.B. Church in Lugovsk, "Neu Samara"

century. On the Volga it was Martin Claassen (author of a familiar, small volume on Mennonite history), a devout and reasonable man, and Claas Epp who was widely known among the Mennonites of Russia through his book, *Die Entsiegelung des Propheten Daniels* (The Decoding of the Prophet Daniel). Later he became even more notorious for his fanatical religious obsession. An early, enthusiastic participant and disciple of Epp has written a detailed and very interesting account of the movement and particularly about Epp. Now a sober critic and an honest and reasonable Christian, he writes about these things in his book entitled *Unser Auszug Nach Mittelasien* (Our Exodus to Central Asia) by Franz Bartsch, teacher in Lysanderhoeh, Province of Samara (published by "Raduga," Halbstadt). The first leader in the movement in the Molotschna was Abraham Peters (Fuerstenau-Friedensruh), a former public school teacher, who in 1873 established his own church under the name "The Brethren Church among the Mennonites" (referred to as the Abraham Peters Church to distinguish it from the Hermann Peters Church). This church drew a number of members from the Ohrloff-Neukirch Church and other parishes. This church differed from the Mennonite Brethren Church of 1860 in its freedom in the matter of baptism[349] and a pronounced *Kleine Gemeinde* character in the positive sense which expressed itself in strict church discipline in all life situations, particularly in economic issues. However, preoccupation with petty things was another characteristic. The "Abraham Peters Church" also held, as did the Volga brethren, that in the imminent period of the Anti-Christ, the only place of refuge for God's children was in central Asia (Jung-Stilling's theory). It should be mentioned here that our "Mennonite Wuest," the late Minister Bernhard Harder, was for some time a strong supporter of this view, in sharp contrast to his cousin, the frequently mentioned Elder, Johann Harder. The generous provisions for exemption in military matters, granted to the Mennonites by Alexander II, seemed to them, as it did to those who emigrated to America, an unevangelical association with "the Beast," the state, hostile to God. However, these people considered the West, including America, a type of all that is opposed to God, so that in this respect they were separated from Elder Isaak Peters and other emigrants. Br. Bernhard Harder was satisfied with the concessions for exemption granted in 1874, and as a result was condemned for this by both the "Americans" and also those bound for Asia. The writings of the Bavarian Pastor Cloeter were widely read by the "Exodus" or "Kingdom-believing" people. The pastor had established an "exodus colony" by the name of Gnadenburg, in the Terek District (this was a sort of a pre-refuge). However, with respect to military service, the pastor held the view generally held in Protestant circles, and he also held infant baptism in high regard. Our Mennonite

"exodus brethren" combined a rigorous Mennonitism with the old German evangelical pietism,[350] and certain of Jung-Stilling's views. "Under the wings of the great eagle"—Russia, the fleeing "wise virgins" were to be "kept secure from the great tribulation." In 1880 several dozen Molotschna families and a greater number from the Volga (Koeppental parish) actually moved to Turkestan. In addition to the Elder Abraham Peters, another prominent leader was Brother Johann Regehr, Hamberg, from the Halbstadt Volost (presently an elder of the Mennonite Church in Turkestan). Claas Epp disillusioned the majority of the "exodus brethren" with his fantastic foolishness (he set himself as second "son," alongside Christ) and left with a small group of followers to settle in the domain of the Khan of China. The others decided to settle in the neighborhood of the river Syr-Daria, District Aulie Ata, about 200 versts from Tashkent. There they founded five villages under the special favor and with the assistance and counsel of the then incumbent Governor-general of Turkestan, von Kaufmann. He was able to secure for them the concession that their young men could render their alternative service (replacing military service) right on the settlement, in the midst of their families. The service consisted of planting a specified number of trees. Br. Jakob Janzen (earlier a minister in the Mennonite Church, subsequently a founder of a special "Brethren" Church which practiced baptism by immersion, which he finally led to merge with the Mennonite Brethren Church) proved to be a skilled and useful liaison person between the settlers and the authorities. In 1910 the settlement included about 200 families, consisting of about 1000 persons. By now they had been cured of their exaggerated "exodus-refuge idea." After weathering the familiar controversies, hurt feelings, demonstrations of godly and ungodly zeal in different issues, revival and various church organizations and dissolutions, they were finally organized as the Romanovka Mennonite Church and the Nikolaipol Mennonite Brethren Church (the respective names were derived from the villages in which the church buildings were located). The M.B. Church membership is slightly smaller in number than the Mennonite Church. The relationship between these two sister churches is really cordial. Seldom has the *furor Mennoniticus*, the Mennonite passion for sectarianism, permitted such a relationship.

In 1905, the leadership of the Nikolaipol M.B. Church in Turkestan consisted of the following persons: Elder Heinrich Kroeker (minister since 1885), ordained as elder by Elder Jakob Jantz, Friedensfeld. The ministers: Jakob Janzen, since 1875, Jakob Mandtler, since 1875, Johann Klassen, since 1899, Aron Dyck, since 1904, Franz Braun, since 1904. The deacons were: Jakob Wedel, since 1904. By the end of 1908, church membership stood at 249 and the total including adherents stood at over 501. In certain ecclesiastical, administrative matters, the

Nikolaipol M.B. Church is distinctive, but it enjoys full spiritual fellowship with the total M.B. Brotherhood. In response to frequent requests, the brotherhood has sent visiting ministers as well as provided other services (ordination, etc.).

It should be noted that after the first disillusionment, a fair number of families of the M.B. fellowship (also from the ranks of other settlers) emigrated to America. It is one of these brethren who emigrated, Minister Janzen, minister of the M.B. Church who has provided us with a valuable account of the origin and the organization of that church.

§259 This special section of the book about the M.B. Church has come to be exceptionally long. We want to conclude it in order to take up the thread of the story of the larger Mennonite brotherhood in Russia, which for quite some time now has been popularily referred to as the Mennonite Church. We also want to shed some more light upon the reciprocal relationships which the two ecclesiastical organizations presently (1910) have to each other. Then each one of them is to be evaluated according to its strengths or weaknesses, plus or minus. Even as we saw in this completed section D that the story of the development of both groups was continually one of mutual interaction, so we shall also find it in section E (especially in chapter 32, in the issue of military service). This is so because both are really inseparable parts of one collective living organism. Special emphasis will later be given to the development, within the M.B. Church, of missionary activity among pagan peoples.



Tsar Alexander II (1855-1881).

E.

MILITARY SERVICE AND THE ATTITUDE OF THE RUSSIAN MENNONITES TOWARD THE STATE AND THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA. EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

XXXII.

PREAMBLE: IS THE "NONRESISTANT" MENNONITE UNPATRIOTIC?

1. The Mennonite's Attitude Towards Fatherland and Fellow Citizens §260

a) Already in chapter VI, "Mennonite Customs and Characteristics," we have recorded a variety of opinions from non-Mennonite authors concerning the Mennonites' position with regard to the fatherland as well as their relationship with fellow citizens of another faith. While, for literary reasons, we are dealing with this question prior to the major issue of this section (E)—that is, the military involvement question—we will follow our method again of allowing a non-Mennonite to speak. We cite from a publication by the current president of the Commission on Religious Affairs, Mr. P.V. Kamensky: "A Question or a Misunderstanding."[1] Mr. Kamensky refutes Mr. A. A. Velizyn,[2] a well-known leading voice of his time, in the energetic literary attack which was levelled against the German colonists in general and the Mennonites in particular during the 90s of the previous century. Mr. Velizyn accuses the colonists and the Mennonites not only of a lack of patriotism but even of traitorous views and conspiracy with the German "fatherland." On page 13 of Mr. Velizyn's book: *Die Deutschen in Russland* (The Germans in Russia), he laments: "It is painful to see how the Germans, who have been honored with the privilege of being called Russian subjects, have trampled this right under foot. One cannot hold back the question which rises from the depths of the heart: 'Why do they sit here, when their heart is still in Berlin; why do they push themselves into our midst?' " Mr. Kamensky, who in his aforementioned brochures energetically rejects as absolutely groundless and dishonest the accusations which Mr. Velizyn and people of similar persuasion have levelled against the German colonists, refers

to a publication entitled, *Unsere Kolonien*, by A. Klaus, from which we have repeatedly quoted. Klaus is, in Mr. Kamensky's opinion, a competent and non-partisan expert and critic of the colonists and the Mennonites—and his book is a refutation of Velizyn. Kamensky throws glaring light upon Velizyn's injustice by citing (p. 13, *op.cit.*) several passages from the book of a noted hero in the Crimean War, Mr. Alabin: "The colonists are entirely satisfied with their lot; they love their new fatherland as we its native children love it, and are ready, as we are, to sacrifice everything they have for it. The colonists have proven this during the present campaign [1854-1855]. Just an enumeration of the sacrifices which have been made by the colonists of Russia, particularly the Mennonites, would make up a very telling page in the story of these colonies. It would serve as living testimony of their love for Russia and their sympathy for our great cause. I know from personal experience of numerous such sacrifices. During our last march in the Crimea, we moved from the Turkish border through many colonies and experienced love and friendly co-operation everywhere; nowhere did we have any negative encounters with the inhabitants; not a single incident took place which spoke other than favorably of the colonists . . . . During our march we camped out for the most part and naturally ate from the camp kettle; but the field hospital personnel, the various military staff, the convoy—filled the villages [colonies]. Under no circumstances did the colonists even permit their occupants to cook porridge for themselves. They fed the soldiers and, beyond that, provided them with a soft piece of bread or cake for the journey. Naturally this pleased the soldiers a great deal since their teeth had become dull, as it were, from eating dry, roasted bread ('Ssuchari').

"From Aleschki we conducted marches which dear father Suvorov himself would hardly have allowed his soldiers to make! The circumstances of war demanded that we move on quickly—very few of our people lived in the Crimea, especially in Sevastopol. We did not enjoy a single overnight camp all the way from the Dnieper to the Tschornaia Rietschka, except in Perekop where we were given opportunity to catch our breath. We arrived at the station, ate our porridge, and moved on again. Concerning the details of this perhaps unprecedented march we will speak later. At this point, I simply want to share to what extent the colonists participated in this hurried advance. Naturally, in just a few days we could not cover the gigantic distance before us on foot—to say nothing of being ready for battle at the moment of arrival. But then the colonists appeared from a distance about 500 versts in circumference. More than 5000 of them came on their splendid carriages harnessed with pairs of strong, capable horses, and offered their services voluntarily. With their help we flew across the

stretch of 300 versts in the shortest possible time. This included our entire army corps (the 4th), three divisions of the infantry, all of the artillery equipment, the sharp-shooters as well as the sappers. For an entire month the colonists stood at their appointed stations, enduring all hardships as only a plain person can, several hundred kilometers from home, living largely in the open field for several weeks. As soon as the colonists had brought one regiment to a given post they turned back, loaded another group and transported it to the next station. Such trips they had to make twelve to fifteen times and the smallest post was not less than 30 versts removed. It was not easy for them and still—we experienced nothing but genuine sincerity and heard only friendly words of brotherly welcome. Faithfully they carried out the duty which they had voluntarily assumed, and after thanking us for our kindness, returned to their homes.

"We had been sent to join the infantry division which was under the command of the General, Prince Gortschakov I, stationed by the Tschornaia Rietschka. There we had further opportunity to be deeply indebted to the colonists. They brought several hundred wagon loads of assorted things from distant colonies as a spontaneous love offering for the soldiers. Mountains of potatoes, onions, beans, barley, oats and everything edible were distributed gratis among the soldiers without taking into account their regular rations. The grain was also apportioned to the artillery horses, regardless of their regular military ration of forage. The dear, brave soldiers munched heartily on baked potatoes and spoke in superlatives of the German people. However, the helpful German Mennonites earned the gratitude not only of those whom the colonists served, but indeed of all mankind, through a single service which I will now endeavor to relate. The scene of the war which had escalated to the greatest possible dimension had through force of circumstances, as everyone knows, shifted all too quickly from the shores of the Danube to the bountiful shores of the Salgir. In the Crimea it had been impossible to make the necessary military preparations for so sizable an army as that which suddenly formed on the peninsula. The battle of the Alma, the long bombardment of Sevastopol, the battle of October 13 by the Tschorgun, of October 24 on the heights of Inkermann, the daily gun battles and the continuous casualties among the defenders of Sevastopol could not take place without a great increase in the number of our wounded. Add to that even the smallest number of normal sicknesses among our people as well as the wounded prisoners and it becomes clear that the number of those that required thorough medical attention among the military forces concentrated in the Sevastopol area was considerable. Consequently, in order to provide for the sick, it was necessary to have medical equipment and furnished hospital quarters in

readiness, to say nothing of medical remedies, a compassionate nursing service and an effective supervision. The city of Simferopol, situated nearest to the center of the war, was filled with casualties in short order. It was essential that they be moved further inland. And what did the Mennonites from the District of Molotschna do now? They took full responsibility for the care and provision of five thousand wounded and sick (soldiers) from Simferopol, transported them to their colonies, and offered them excellent accommodations, care, and nurture as prescribed by the doctor. Their wives and daughters took on the sacred duty of sisters of mercy. They themselves dressed up the wounds, they tore up their own laundry for cotton batting and bandages, took care of the sick as they would their own children and brothers and all of this without charge to the government for all those in their care. Only doctors and medicine needed to be supplied. A number of persons were given lodging in a tidy dwelling, and placed in soft beds. The sheets and pillowcases, supplied by the host, were changed frequently and the wholesome nourishing food as prescribed by the physician served in an atmosphere of tender feminine care. One can imagine how much faster the wounded must have recovered here than in the atmosphere of even the best of field hospitals! How very many have the Mennonites saved for future battles with this service.[3] In this manner they have returned a service to Mother Russia for allowing them to settle on one of her best little corners and for the prosperity which came to them because they knew how to acquire and develop it from the native potential of the land." ("Four Wars. Notes during the Campaign" by P. Alabin, pp. 33, 34.)

"In view of these undeniable facts," Mr. Kamensky continues, "which characterize the conduct of the former colonists, the reader can judge for himself how audacious and lacking in truth the contention is that in our time of trial the colonists were passive and coldly indifferent to our heartache—that they sought their own well-being and exploited Russia's time of stress for their own advantage." (Velizyn, p. 134, *op.cit.*) Mr. Kamensky further refers to the colonists' exemption from military service at that time (p. 17) and emphasizes that they were all the more useful in view of their unique position. We may add here—when Mr. Velizyn and those who are of similar persuasion keep stressing that the colonists (and Mennonites), nevertheless, did not shed their blood for the fatherland but only gave up a very small part of their possessions which themselves were acquired in Russia—that a good number of Mennonites (as well as other colonists, no doubt) also gave their lives in loving service of the fatherland. Many were infected and died (some at home, others on the way) as a consequence of the military epidemics (dysentery, etc.).

Just recently (beginning of August, 1910) we had the pleasure of

seeing documented the highest recognition of one of these sacrifices by Tsar Alexander II, in the form of a gold watch, suitably engraved. In Ekaterinoslav, W.W. Penner, the former secondary school teacher at Chortitza, now owns this imperial gift. He received it at the age of two "as the son bearing the same name" as Wilhelm Penner who died during the "wagon maneuver." (Podvoden: according to the Mennonite dialect, meaning "carriage".) Wilhelm Penner was supervisor and director of a group of Mennonites from Chortitza and died in the Crimea after being infected by typhoid fever which was prevalent in the military camp. Mr. W. Penner, the owner of the golden watch, was in a position to assert that two such "imperial watches" had been granted in the Chortitza colony and four in Molotschna.

§261 b) The imperial justice and kindness of two Russian monarchs have paid tribute to the Mennonites in a further manner. They have indelibly testified for all time to the patriotic love and thank-offerings of the Mennonites (as well as other colonists) during that time of difficulty in Russia as substantiated by Mr. Kamensky and Mr. Alabin. Consequently the Mennonites of the Molotschna Colony (only a Molotschna Mennonite District at that time) are in possession of the following document[4] of which the original copy is kept in the administrative office of the Halbstadt Volost.

"With the Consent
of His Majesty, the Sovereign
Nicholas I,
Emperor and Sole Ruler of All Russia

"From the reports, occasioned by the current state of war, presented to His Imperial Majesty by the Molotschna Mennonite churches, the Lord and Emperor has learned that the former have proven their devotion by providing the crown with large sums of money and the army with large amounts of goods, by providing the means to transport military equipment, as well as through their friendly readiness to care for wounded soldiers, whom they offered to support and supply with all the necessary medical supplies entirely at their own expense. In consideration of a zeal so worthy of emulation demonstrated by the Molotschna Mennonite churches, the Emperor has commanded the Minister of Crown Lands to reward the same by granting them a document in His Majesty's name which will forever serve as a proof of their praiseworthy actions.

"This document has been presented to the Molotschna Mennonite churches pursuant to such a high command. St. Petersburg, December 31, 1854.

The Minister of Crown Lands,
Adjutant General, Count P. Kisselev
Director, E. Hahn"

The Chortitza Volost administration (as well as the other colonists) possesses an identical document prepared by order of Tsar Alexander II and dated November 26, 1885.

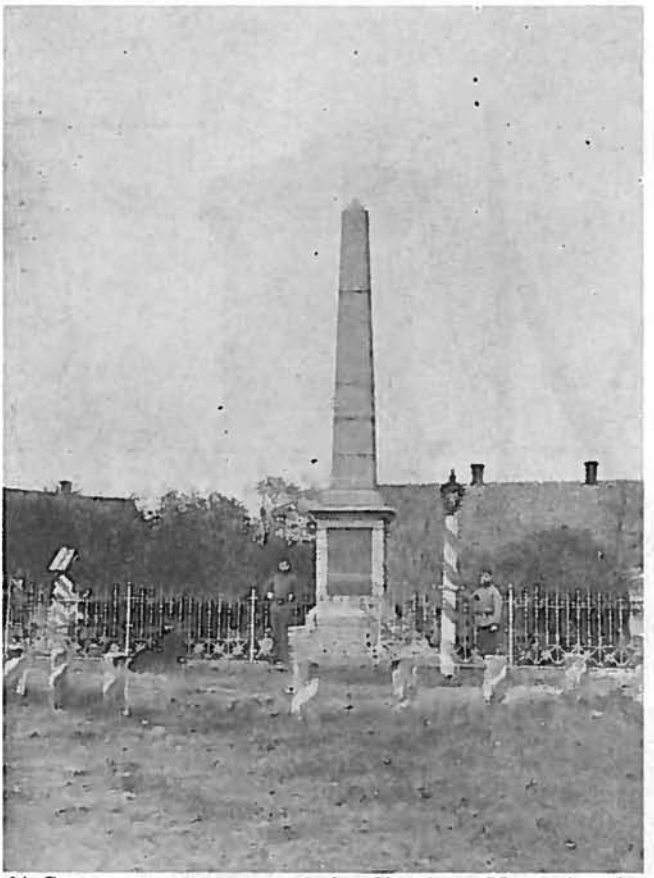
§261(2) We do not want to leave unmentioned that the commander of the Tarutin rifle regiment, Major-General Volkov, had a monument built in honor of the Molotschna Mennonites. It stands on the corner of the old secondary school in the Neu-Halbstadt settlement to this day. The inscription reads: "For the zeal shown on March 30 and 31, 1854, in crossing [at risk of life across the swollen Molotschna River] and for excellent hospitality."

Not only the mild oil of mercy and genuine submissiveness are evident in the "Podvod" story but also many a piece of daring and resolute self-assertion. Several former participants who are now well on in years tell us of these incidents. The following is one of many anecdotes: A party of carriage drivers ("Podvoders") from the Mennonites of Molotschna, after carrying out a variety of errands over and above the call of duty at the whim of several section leaders, was asked by a military officer of the Cossacks to make yet another unauthorized haul of some sort of freight. Feed for the horses and food for the drivers had completely run out by now. As "escorts" the officer placed several of his own Cossacks beside the column of Mennonite carriages. The leader of this fleet asks the "boys": "What do they think—how do they feel?" "Sir ('Ohmke'), it can't go on like this." "I feel the same way," says the leader. Then he directs them to form a neat semi-circle, each wagon facing the road, each rein pulled taut, and each driver sitting alert with both feet braced. "And when I say, 'Boys, now!'—then prove that you know how to drive." "Yes, Sir!" "What's the matter?" asks one of the supervising Cossacks. "We're arranging ourselves more conveniently so that we can start at the very first signal." (Splendid fellows, the Germans.) "All set?" asks the leader. "Yes Sir!" "Boys, now!" "Yes Sir!" The whole company thunders away and before the Cossacks can clearly see what is happening those "splendid German fellows" have disappeared in a cloud of dust and the Cossack steeds are unable to catch up with the Mennonite farmers' nags. Thus they came home in a cheerful mood—until it was time to haul on another "Podvod." Many a person participated in up to fifteen such expeditions.

Even in the realm of romance some interesting chapters were written during this time of the "Podvod." A former "Podvod" driver, now seventy-five years old, a most noble and pious Mennonite from Sagradovka, relates: A colonist from Prischib, newlywed, stands near "Sievernu" (on the west side) beside his wagon which has a broken wheel



a) Monument in Neu-Halbstadt, 1854 (during the time of Podwod).



b) Centennary monument of the Chortitzer Mennonites in Chortitza (1789-1889).

and scolds the crying injustice of his situation (in hearty Swabian). At home his young wife Anne-Marie is crying her eyes out and here he stands with this d--- wheel. Who can fix it for him? The nearest wagon smith lives in Hoffental (perhaps also in Nassau) several hundred versts removed. If only the Tsar were aware of this situation, he would put a very speedy end to this cursed injustice, but these "gentlemen" . . . In the meantime a crowd of drivers, soldiers and officers had gathered around this scolding, philosophizing and warmhearted young newlywed. At that point a commotion arises, everyone salutes very respectfully and quietly so that even "our Swabian brother" becomes attentive. Two eminent officers, slim and youthful, step out of a carriage. One of them addresses the man whose wagon wheel is broken and whose heart longs fondly for Anne-Marie, to determine what has gone wrong. The young man recounts all his grief and irritation, "If only the Tsar . . . ." "Well, my boy," replies one of the slender officers, "It's true, the Tsar is not here, but nevertheless you shall return to your Anne-Marie." (The two officers were the Grand-Dukes Konstantin and Nikolai Nikolaievitsch.) One of them tears a page out of his note book, writes a few lines, and hands the paper to the young man. "There," he says, "present this to that gentleman over there!" And in very short order Hans Georg was reunited with his Anne-Marie. What happened to the wheel is more than uncle H. in Sch. of Sagradovka can remember. If the author is unable to retell uncle H.'s story verbatim it is due to a failing memory. The substance of the story, however, is guaranteed.

§262 c) During the Turkish War of 1877-78, also, the Mennonites from Molotschna and Chortitza offered generous amounts of supplies voluntarily. As a result, the people of the Chortitza Volost possess a memorial for their patriotism in the form of a document[5] which reads as follows:

"To the Chortitza Volost Administration

"By order of the head of this province, as outlined in a directive dated December 19 (Number 3936) I am informing the volost administration, who will notify the settlers, of the following: Through the Minister of the Interior, a report has been made by His Excellency to Her Majesty the Tsarina who has taken very special notice of the willingness to serve on the part of the Chortitza Colony settlers (District of Ekaterinoslav). Her Majesty has been informed of the settlers' eagerness to prepare, free of charge, a 20 bed hospital in the communal garden not far from the village of Chortitza where sick and wounded soldiers were treated and fully supported for the duration of this present war—in addition to 487 military persons who had already been dismissed from local hospitals for recuperation. Her Imperial Majesty has given highest decree to extend

thanks to the settlers for their generosity. December 23, 1877 (Signature of the District official).

§263 Nor were the Molotschna Mennonites of the Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld Volosts to be outdone in this humanitarian, patriotic service and spirit of sacrifice. The Halbstadt Volost founded a hospital in the Neu-Halbstadt Colony. This 100 bed hospital for sick and wounded soldiers[6] was built without any financial aid from the government. From October 1877 to March 1878, 174 wounded soldiers were treated here. The people of the Halbstadt Volost carried the full financial support for the total operation of the hospital except for the local physicians who rendered their services free of charge. This kind of co-operation was brought by the Gnadenfeld Volost to the service of the government.

§264 2. a) In all other times of general need, also, when the state made efforts to alleviate such distress—the Mennonites have abundantly demonstrated their willingness to co-operate generously. Kamensky again substantiates (pp. 27ff) that the Chortitza Volost (from 1853 to 1892) spent about 100,000 rubles on national needs and Russian charitable institutions (over 60,000 during the Crimean War alone!). From 1876 to 1892, the (very small) Nikolaifeld Volost [daughter colony of Chortitza] gave 4,000 rubles and 300 rubles for the construction of an Orthodox church. The Schoenfeld Volost in the Alexandrovsk District (daughter colony of Molotschna, on landowner's property) in a period of time from 1889 to 1892 (only 3 to 4 years!) placed at the disposal of the authorities products and money worth 12,561 rubles. The Molotschna Mennonites, then living in what was known as the Molotschna Mennonite territory, brought the following sacrifices between 1861-1862 to provide for the Bulgarian immigrants whom the government had permitted to settle in the Berdiansk District and who lived in the Mennonite colonies for many months. The Mennonites declined to accept 50,000 rubles which the government wanted to pay them as compensation for their support of these Bulgarian immigrants. The Mennonites loaned 900 tons of grain from their communal storage bin to the Bulgarian colony for food as well as seed and delivered it into the central storage bin cost free. The Lutheran and Catholic colonists in the Prischib (Molotschna) District proved themselves equally charitable. The imperial expression of thanks for these donations is given below:[7]

"His Imperial Majesty wishes to express sincerest best wishes to the colonists and Mennonites of the two Molotschna Districts of the Taurida Province (including their regional and village administrators) for the praiseworthy manner in which they provided room and board for

the 6,000 Bulgarian immigrants (from Viddin) who spent the winter with them."

b) During the famines of the last decade of the previous century and the first year of this century, equally great sums of money have been given by all the Mennonite groups. Probably hundreds of thousands in monies and goods were raised (of which, with regard to the year 1891, Mr. Kamensky again bears persuasive and well-documented witness). Both civil and religious communities as well as private groups and persons worked diligently to alleviate this national distress by offering money, goods and personal labors of love at the place of need. §265

3. a) During the unfortunate Japanese War, hundreds of thousands of rubles and trainloads of products and warm clothing, linen and bandages, partly prepared by thousands of busy women's and girls' hands, like cotton batting "charpie" during the Crimean war, were sent. Every informed person knows what the Tauridan Mennonites (who celebrated their 100th Anniversary in 1904) contributed towards the preparation and maintenance of the Taurida District hospital, which came into being because of the Crimean War and also what the Chortitza Mennonites contributed towards a similar hospital in the Ekaterinoslav District. Numerous letters of heartfelt gratitude testify for all time concerning these deeds of kindness. We have cited only a few of the many which were awarded in earlier as well as present times. Concerning the imperial letters of thanks and recognition in the time of the Crimean War and others, Mr. Kamensky, in refutation of the unjust accusations which overzealous "patriots" have made, makes the following choice observations: "When, substantiated with facts, it is proven that people [the colonists and Mennonites], as a body, voluntarily and unanimously sacrificed money, services, and products at any time, as the need arose, for the benefit of their fatherland, [we could add, as Mr. Kamensky does in another place 'at the risk of health and life,' e.g. Wilhelm Penner, above]—and when it is proven that their conduct, as clearly witnessed everywhere, attracted the recognition of the highest government and was called a 'heroic service' by the Monarch—then, in the face of these facts, they fortify themselves with such meaningless phrases as: 'That means nothing, the "kulaks" (land speculators in the villages) contributed hundreds of rubles.' §266

b) We have already mentioned above that our Mennonite brothers (as well as other German colonists) had sacrificed their very lives during the Crimean War. The Japanese War presented further opportunities for such sacrifice, and that on an absolutely voluntary basis. By the dozens our young men, pretty well all of them from the ranks of those who had

already served in the barracks, streamed to the front lines of the war voluntarily to serve as medics with the view of caring for "their sick and wounded brothers." The churches, furthermore, donated many thousands for equipping these medics, over and above the sums already mentioned. Out of this group of our young brothers, who for love of fellow-man and country left the comfort, quiet and security of their home life, there were three or four who lost their lives because of infectious diseases, thereby suffering "death for the Fatherland" in full measure. It should be noted here, too, that Dr. Nikolai Friesen, Tiege, a well-known and beloved Mennonite, died of over-exertion during his military service as physician in the army in Manchuria.

We could cite much more in praise of our Mennonite people from Mr. Kamensky and other sources but we will let this suffice. May our lives testify that we love God, his church and mankind, our Tsar, our fatherland, and our fellow citizens, with a warm, grateful and active love!

XXXIII.
MILITARY SERVICE AND THE EMIGRATION OF RUSSIAN MENNONITES TO AMERICA

§267 1. The question of "non-resistance" provided the basis and the motivation for the emigration to America, which we have touched upon here and there.

Tsar Paul's "Charter of Privileges" states as follows: "Sixthly. We give them [the Mennonites] our most gracious assurance that no one of the presently settled Mennonites nor of those who are inclined to settle in our empire in the future, nor their children and offspring, is obligated to participate in military or civilian duties at any time unless personal desire for such duty is expressed."[8]

2. It was in the year 1871,[9] that the first rumors of a proposed compulsory military service startled the Mennonites of Russia. Meetings of the civic and church councils in the Chortitza and Molotschna Districts were held and co-operative deliberations with representatives from both colonies followed. It was decided to send a deputation to St. Petersburg, if possible, directly to the Tsar. When, on February 16, 1871, the Chortitza deputies—Elder Gerhard Dyck and Minister Heinrich Epp (secondary school teacher)—arrived in St. Petersburg, they found the Molotschna deputation already there: Elder Leonhard Sudermann, from Berdiansk, Minister Peter Goertz, from the Rudnerweide Church, Minister Franz Isaak from the Ohrloff congregation (the well-known attorney of the "brethren") and the secretary for the District of

Halbstadt, Herman Janzen (former teacher at the Ohrloff Association School). It is noteworthy that Epp and Janzen had good command of the Russian language; the others, however, did not. (Epp had passed the examinations for a Russian elementary school teacher, Janzen served for years as land surveyor for the Supervisory Commission.) Isaak had a sufficient grasp of written legal language.

3. In St. Petersburg the Mennonites were cordially received by Privy Councillor Ettinger, president of the Supervisory Commission who was staying at the capitol, and the former president, Baron Medem, who was at that time a high official in the Ministry of Crown Lands. The latter introduced the delegates to the Minister of Crown Lands who was, then, the chief authority over all the colonies. The Minister regretted the fact that the two elders, after a seventy-year stay of the Mennonites in Russia, could not speak the Russian language and declared this a sin. Minister Epp's assurance that efforts were being made to make up for this neglect, he answered with: "Too late!"

4. A presentation of the basic principles of non-resistance was made, at Baron Medem's request, showing exactly how they grow out of the (Mennonite) articles of faith. The document (contained in its entirety in D.H. Epp's book, which we have cited, as well as in several manuscripts in our archives) is signed: "Church elders: Gerhard Dueck and Leonhard Sudermann; Minister Franz Isaak, Peter Goertz and Heinrich Epp; Church member Hermann Janzen. St. Petersburg, March 2, 1871."

5. On the date cited the six men were received by the president of the Commission for working out the legislation concerning compulsory military service, Count Heyden. The Count told them that it was intended from the very beginning that the Mennonites' Confession of Faith should be taken into consideration and that they would in any case not be expected to take up arms,—only to render medical services, and even this "not until about 25 years later." (?) The explanation by Elder Sudermann, at the second meeting with the Count on the following day, that the Mennonites could not participate even in the medical corps if it was affiliated with the military, upset the Count. He voiced his opinion to the effect that the Mennonites would then have to look for another country where no duties whatsoever existed towards the state. He asked, furthermore, "whether the Mennonites recognized any state organization at all?" Elder Sudermann who did not understand him, answered: "No." This would no doubt have caused another misunderstanding on the Count's part had Sudermann not added immediately that the Mennonites acknowledge the authorities over them, obey them and pray for them. In answer to the question, what he would do in case of war, Sudermann said: "I would be reconciled, go to meet the enemy and

embrace him,[10] but I would not kill!" The Count smiled and suggested that no state could exist if everyone did not want to take up arms, and so the Mennonites contribute nothing useful whatsoever to the state. When Sudermann remained silent, Minister Epp spoke up: "If people followed the example of non-resistance they would draw back from any kind of fighting whatsoever." Count Medem, Count Heyden's adjutant (a young commander of the guards), laughed and suggested that if all people were Mennonites there would be no war at all! Count Heyden then explained that the delegates could do nothing further for their cause at this time and that they were thus at liberty to drive home. He would inform them at the appropriate time and repeated what was said earlier concerning medical service.

6. The deputies were not permitted to confer with the Tsar personally, but His Majesty allowed himself to be seen as if by chance (during a leisurely drive) and honored them with a few words.

7. ". . . During our deputies' stay in St. Petersburg they had found a noble friend in the person of Pastor Hans, leader of the local Moravian Brethren[11] congregation. This dear man took an active part in the Mennonites' concern and energetically helped along where he could. His counsel and work were often of substantial help to them. . . ."

8. On February 26, 1873, a second deputation came to St. Petersburg. It consisted of Elder Gerhard Dyck, Chortitza; Elder Bernhard Peters, Margenau; Minister Heinrich Epp, Chortitza; Minister Peter Goertz, Rudnerweide; and Mr. Heinrich Heese, Ekaterinoslav. With Pastor Hans they found representatives from the Volga Mennonites and the Volynian Mennonites. A representative from the Hutterites (Huttertal and Johannesruh near Melitopol), Joseph Hofer, was also there. On March 6, they were led into the palace of the president of the Imperial Council, Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaievitch, who had granted them an audience. ". . . His Imperial Highness was friendly, condescending, and spoke German to our surprise. . . . He inquired about our home country and after we had named the provinces from which we came, he asked about each one's village. He mentioned the fact that he had visited our villages, whereupon we answered that we had pleasant memories of that visit. Our concern, he continued, was well known to him. Nevertheless he was going to receive our written petition and peruse it later. The petition could not exempt us from compulsory military duty; since, however, according to our faith we were not permitted to carry weapons or take part in warfare, the government would protect our conscience by assigning us to hospitals and work camps instead of conscripting us into military service. We had been in Russia for 70 or 80 years (he said), and enriched ourselves and had enjoyed protection and favor: now we were to recognize our duty to do

something for the fatherland. When we replied that we felt deeply grateful toward our eminent sovereign and beloved father of our nation, and that we were prepared to prove such gratitude in a manner which would not cause conflict for our consciences, he answered: 'You are supposed to be good Christians and as such it is your duty to help and take care of a wounded soldier.' When we tried to explain to him that such service rendered under military command was different from voluntary service, his countenance darkened somewhat. He discontinued, took the petition from us, and dismissed us. The general appearance of his highness was cordial, as was his bearing, but at the same time, firm and determined. . . ."

9. Under these circumstances, the Mennonites began to consider the question of emigration. Nonetheless, another attempt to contact His Imperial Majesty personally was made. In the fall of 1873 a third deputation went to St. Petersburg: Elder Gerhard Dyck, Minister Heinrich Epp and Heinrich Heese, all from the Chortitza congregations; and Elder Bernhard Peters and Minister Peter Goertz from the Molotschna. All attempts to reach the Tsar were in vain. With the approval of Pastor Hans, the following petition to the monarch was delivered to the Ministry of Crown Lands:

"Your Imperial Majesty!

Most gracious Tsar and Lord!

"With distressed hearts, yet full of confidence in a benevolent and gracious reception of our most submissive plea, we respectfully approach the steps of the throne of your Imperial Majesty.

"Our forefathers, called into the empire by the highest government,[12] furnished with an imperial charter,[13] which promised us complete freedom of religion and conscience, and exemption from military and civil service in perpetuity, found a haven here for themselves and their descendants. Thanks to the protection of your Majesty and especially of your predecessors, this has continued to the present.

"However, because of the intended introduction of universal military service, which, as we understand, is to be enacted into law in the immediate future, our hearts are deeply troubled that we should lose a significant part of our confession of faith, the article concerning non-resistance. We have presented our concerns not only to the imperial commission appointed to implement the proposed law, but have also had the honor at the beginning of this year to present them in the form of a petition to His Imperial Highness Konstantin Nicholaievitsch, the President of the Imperial Council.

"The issue is so serious and important for us—it constitutes a

question of life and death for the continuation of our brotherhood—that we feel compelled in our hearts to turn to the beloved father of our land, our Tsar and lord. In complete submission and deepest respect, but in childlike faith in the fatherly heart of your Majesty, who has an open ear for the cry of pain of the lowliest children in the land, we lay before your Imperial Majesty yourself our urgent plea for preservation of the freedom of conscience which we have enjoyed until the present.

"In the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, who through our fathers has given us the gospel of peace, who through His holy word commands us to follow in His footsteps in love, in the way of suffering and endurance, but not of war and that which is associated with it, we implore your Majesty most graciously to free us from military obligation, and we shall not cease to pray to our God and Lord to pour out the fullness of His blessing on the dear head of His anointed, and on the illustrious imperial household, and to protect our beloved fatherland from all war and misfortune, so that its well-being under the blessed and wise government of its beloved monarch may develop and be enduringly established evermore in peace.

"In deepest respect, submission and faithfullness
Your Majesty's
Most obedient
Representatives of the Mennonite Churches."

(The signatures of Gerhard Dyck, Bernhard Peters, Heinrich Epp, Peter Goertz, and Heinrich Heese.)

§268 10. The efforts of the Mennonites caused the friendly Tsar Alexander II to send a special confidant to the Molotschna and Chortitza colonies in April of 1874. He was Adjutant-General (subsequently Count) Totleben, the well-known, congenial engineer from the Sevastopol campaign who was supposed to restrain the energetic migration movement to America, which had already begun. This he did through proposals which praised the fatherland and which made maximum concessions to the Mennonites' conscience. He also expressed friendly words of caution concerning the uncertain future in America. In an open assembly at the church in Neu-Halbstadt as well as in smaller meetings with church and civil administrations of the Molotschna Mennonites, held in the district office at Halbstadt and later in Chortitza, this most charming and trust-inspiring man [14] conveyed, in a very effective manner, the good will, wishes and proposals of the Tsar for his Mennonite subjects. The result was an extensive reversal of opinion among the Mennonite people. The brotherhoods in most of the communities were instructed and influenced by the administrations in such a way that the

large majority heeded the Tsar's word. Many men from the regions which set the trends, who had earlier decided for emigration (a mass migration as a total body had been a wide-spread subject under consideration), left thoughts of emigration behind and began to promote efforts to remain.[15] The result was that probably less than a third of all Russian Mennonites emigrated from that time until today.

§269 11. The "implacable" leaders of the Mennonite emigration from the Molotschna were: the otherwise so mild and sympathetic Elder Leonhard Sudermann (spokesman for the first deputation) who passed away in America in the year 1900; Isaak Peters,[16] the (due to spiritual and physical influences) otherwise dispositioned, yet no less godly former elder of the Pordenau congregation (former school teacher in Fuerstenau and Sparrau: see #19) who through rather serious and stringent demands in the process of church discipline had lived through a church division; Elder Jakob Buhler, Minister Dietrich Gaeddert, Heinrich Richert and the other ministers from the Alexanderwohl congregation; the well-known "Consul Jansen" from Berdiansk (father of Peter Jansen in Jansen, Nebraska, North America who was a personal friend of McKinley and other delegates from the United States government at the international exhibition in Paris—a man of great political significance in his new homeland and yet of strong Mennonite convictions); and the elder of the "Krimmer M.B. Church" (which had come out of the "Kleine Gemeinde")—Jakob Wiebe. Although all of these men (in our opinion) set themselves apart from us in their narrow partisan Mennonite tendency, we cannot help but acknowledge their deep and honest piety and the genuine sincerity of their convictions. In a similar way, the emigration was zealously and fanatically propagandized by Abram Thiessen[17] from Neu-Halbstadt in Schoenau who was philosophically a complete stranger to the men just mentioned. Thiessen was a man of great capabilities, but had fallen away from Christianity entirely. He was a child of the "Kleine Gemeinde" which, because of its severe orthodoxy (excommunication and expulsion with the severest consequences because of a love offering for the Bible Society—factum est!!) had driven him into atheism and materialism. The "Kleine Gemeinde" was later demolished largely by him so that no trace of her is left either in Molotschna or all of Russia.

§270 12. The spiritual leaders for emigration from the Chortitza area were: the elder of the congregation of the "Grand Duke's land," Johann Wiebe,[18] and the elder of the Bergtal congregation, Gerhard Wiebe.

§271 13. The following congregations went to America: the whole Bergtal Colony, Jakob Wiebe's "Krimmer M.B. Gemeinde," the greatest part of

the Alexanderwohl congregation with all (?) its ministers and the Hutterite Mennonites. Of the other elders who went along there was Benjamin Ratzlaff, a retired elder in his high eighties from the Rudnerweide congregation.

14. There remained in Russia: the elders, most of the ministers and by far the greatest part of the congregations in Chortitza and Kronsweide, Ohrloff-Halbstadt—Neukirch, Lichtenau—Petershagen, Margenau—Schoensee, Pordenau, Rudnerweide, Gnadenfeld, and the small Waldheim congregation.

15. It was not until 1879 that an elder [19] of the M.B. Church together with quite a few ministers and church members, left. The elder was Abraham Schellenberg from the Molotschna who became instrumental in assembling and organizing the Mennonite Brethren on the other side of the ocean. (See above: "Molotschna M.B. Church 1872-1885.")

§272 16. As late as 1874 an opponent to the emigration explained its significance as follows: the most extreme element, incapable of a God-willed and God-permitted closer association with Russian society, using the pretense of the inviolability of the religious conscience which the Russian law guaranteed to the Mennonites [naturally only in so far as "religious conscience" does not constitute propaganda in Russia!], and which also hinders its fellow Mennonites in this association, moves away. The Mennonite sheepstall, which is far too low, too narrow, and too confined, is set in motion and ventilated. Those who have left for America have the greatest aversion to culture, but there they come under the influence of culture before they really know or want it; we, here, receive impetus for new life from this fresh air. The spiritual tension which will exist between there and here, will give birth to religious warmth. That is indeed how things developed. They experienced an unexpected religious freshness over there and in turn influenced the Mennonites of Russia. Much of what earlier was characteristic of the "Brethren Church" and perhaps of Gnadenfeld and Ohrloff, became the common experience of Mennonites in both Russia and America. These men: Sudermann, Peters, etc., understood and desired nothing of Russia except its abundantly fertile soil and its Tsar as an eminent abstraction who was real for them only in the sense of being the author and protector of the "Great Charter of Privileges." Naturally, they were prepared to give the required legal "tribute, tax and toll" and perhaps, in case of an emergency, a "charitable donation" for their altogether strange and distant fellow countrymen. They do not, nor were they capable of appreciating the Tsar's enormous efforts on behalf of his people—particularly also, in the creation of the new military law [20] and all that it entails, which, in the lengthy footnote above, we have described as a

relatively evangelical step forward. Nor did they even think of meeting the needs or sympathizing with the trials of this people. They were not only extreme Mennonites; they were also "Germans" in the measure and manner of that German-Russian, gray-haired Lutheran pastor who assured the author that he could not be a truly evangelical preacher if he were convinced that the gospel could be preached and the Christian life nurtured equally well in the Russian, as in the German language! The pious, rather well-educated (but exclusively German educated) Elder Sudermann said to Governor-General Kozebue from New-Russia: "Those of our young people who attend Russian institutions of higher learning are lost." This incident took place during negotiations between the Supervisory Commission and the Governor-General at Odessa in 1869 on the occasion of the "Alexander stipends" which were established by the Mennonites at the instigation of the above mentioned authorities. The stipends (two from the Molotschna and one from Chortitza) were to assist young Mennonites who were seeking education at Russian secondary schools. Subsequent developments have proven the beloved, honorable bishop to be in error. American Mennonite brothers admit that it is far more difficult to keep their young men within the brotherhood in America than it was in Russia. At least this has been personally expressed to the author by several American Mennonite ministers and elders who have returned to Russia as visitors and by a number of Russian Mennonite ministers and elders who travelled over there and have returned. The number of those who either during or as a result of studies in Russian state institutions have left the Mennonite fold (through mixed marriages with Greek-Orthodox women, in consequence of which their children[21] may not become Mennonite) is very small. This has occurred in greater number among those who did not go on to study; and this has been the case for several decades here and there. Actually this is a relatively small percentage when compared to the total number of Mennonites in Russia. The "Mennonitism" of our men who have been educated in Russian secondary schools and universities is just as genuine as that of the average among our people in general. The same can confidently be said of their piety: the educated ones compare most favorably with the average of the Mennonites who experienced nothing but a Mennonite village school training along their educational path. For those good brothers Sudermann, Jansen, Peters and company, the concept of Mennonite and German was at that time, strange to say, synonymous. In Christ, however, there is to be neither Jew nor Greek nor Scythian! Of the Russian language they understood only a very tiny little piece and that only of the profane market dialect. Of the Russian literature or indeed its ethical value or theological treasures they knew about as much as we do about the literature of the Armenians or

Georgians. Concerning the history of Russia they knew pitifully little from German history books. Until that time, these books contained little except the history of Russian wars and court life, and stated that Cossacks, priests and Siberia were to be found in Russia, as well as some dreadful things called "Panslavism" and "Nihilism." When these otherwise honorable men came into contact with real Russian society, apart from the market crowds (to the extent that they could make themselves understood with their meager Russian) they encountered, aside from the low class of people, the pretentious element of that era's merchant or the partially-educated element of that era's minor official. (Both of these types were at that time largely tainted with the once noble liberalism and reform spirit of the 40s and the 60s which had in the case of many adherents begun to deteriorate into a vulgar and immoral nihilism.) "Nihilism" and "Panslavism" (in the form of the coercive national and religious Russianization) garnished with Cossack, priest and Siberia in the background—that was all there was to the Russia of those dear brothers and bishops. If Peters, Gaeddert, Sudermann and company, according to their understanding of things, were to be honest men, they would have to leave [the country] in order to preserve their spiritual heritage for their offspring. They were honest men, and they left. Thank God that they left! It was good for them, for their children and for America. Their conscience was eased, and their children came in contact with a Christian culture which could not have happened in Russia without tragic consequences for the families. America now has many of our Mennonite people, numbering in the thousands. They are very industrious farming families which are enriching Kansas, Nebraska, Dakota, Minnesota, etc., and are spreading even further into Texas, New Mexico, and California. English Canada is also most glad for our orthodox Mennonites because they are good land purchasers and farming people. For us it was also good as stated above; and it was good for Russia which was now free of these unmanageable, pious foster children whom it was impossible to satisfy no matter how hard this modern European state attempted to make every possible concession. At the same time, however, the state retained the greatest part of the Mennonite settlers. They allowed themselves to benefit from the wholesome and useful Russian societal and educational circumstances according to the gracious conditions, which astonished the political world, permitted by the monarch of that time and protected by his noble successors.

§273 17. These conditions for reaching agreement between the Russian government and the Mennonites were contained in the proposals which General Totleben made by order of His Majesty, and were: a) accepted when the Molotschna and Chortitza Mennonites petitioned in the

General's name (April 1874); b) validated by law and confirmed by the highest authority April 8, 1875, published by Senate ukase on May 14, 1875,[22] which outlined the Imperial Council's position concerning the Mennonites' responsibility towards military duty; and c) practically applied in a treaty contracted for a 20 year period of time (on June 25 ff. 1880) between the Commissioner of the Federal Administration and the lawful agencies of the Mennonites. (After expiration, renewed and declared permanent by the Federal government.)

§274 a) The petition of April 1874 reads as follows:

"To His High Excellency the Adjutant General von Totleben

"Your High Excellency: During the days when you were here, you repeatedly and with unalterable determination, assured us and many of our brothers that in the future, as heretofore, we would without change enjoy the favor and grace of His Majesty, our most gracious Tsar and lord. This was demonstrated anew in that His Majesty, through the extraordinary dispatching of Your High Excellency, granted us the grace to follow the basic teachings of our confession of faith while fulfilling the universal personal military obligation by allowing us to perform a non-military service outside the department of the war ministry, so that we would not in any way be brought into relationship with the military system.

"Most humbly we lay at the feet of His Majesty our deeply felt thanks for the most gracious consideration shown us because of the basic precepts of our faith, and our resulting obligation of conscience. In the name of the greater part of our brothers in the faith, we declare ourselves ready to accept personal service. Since we are insufficiently acquainted with the discharging of this service obligation, we request, in a most humble statement and after mature examination, that we be permitted to express which of the kinds of service[23] permitted us we would prefer as being most desirable for our circumstances. At the same time, we feel compelled personally to express our warmest thanks to Your High Excellency for this condescension to us in truly fatherly friendship, and we add the most humble plea that before His Majesty you be the interpreter of our most humble petition, and that you specifically recommend the following points:

"1) That, should a change be made in the military law in the future, so that as a result we would lose the most gracious privileges now granted us, we be permitted freely to emigrate.

"2) That our schools, which the gracious monarch of the Russian Empire has thus far allowed to remain under our free administration, might remain thus and enjoy the rights of other comparable schools in

the empire, in connection with which, out of a feeling of duty toward our dear fatherland, we obligate ourselves to devote all possible attention and care to the learning of the language of the land.

"3) That, through placing our young men in a few places and in closed groups, it be made possible properly to supervise them, to provide them with the necessary nurture, and to practice church discipline according to our confession of faith and our church regulations.

"With deeply-felt wishes and the heartfelt prayer: God keep and protect His Majesty our most gracious Tsar and lord, Her Majesty the Tsarina, His Imperial Highness the heir-apparent and the whole Imperial Household for many, many more years! We remain

Your high Excellency's
most obedient servants.

[Signed on April 22, 1873, by the religious and civil leaders of the Molotschna districts. Those of Chortitza added their endorsement when Totleben visited them.]

§275 b) The law of May 14, 1875, in translation states the following:

"The Mennonites are exempted from bearing arms. On the basis of special regulations, their service is performed in the work-places of the marine department, the fire brigade and in the special mobile detachments of the forestry department. This does not apply to those Mennonites who have joined the sect since January 1, 1875, or have immigrated from abroad.

"Regulations concerning the discharge of
obligatory service by the Mennonites

"Those Mennonites, who prior to the publication of this law concerning military duty, belonged to the sect and had settled [24] in Russia, will, after expiration of the special rights [25] granted them by imperial decree on January 1, 1874, and their becoming subject to the above-mentioned law, discharge their obligatory military service according to the following basic principles:

"1) Places of service, preferably within the boundaries of the New-Russian territory [26] and the neighboring provinces are made available to them for carrying out their active service: a) in the work-places of the marine department; b) in the fire brigades; and c) in special mobile detachments of the forestry department, which are responsible for the planting of forests in South Russia.

"2) The obligatory service of the Mennonites is subject to the same time schedules as are established by law for military service.

"3) Mennonites in the service are united into special groups so that

they may have their joint prayers according to their rules of faith.

"4) Upon completion of their active service the Mennonites, in the event of war, will similarly be used only for the kinds of service mentioned in article 1."

§276 c) The Treaty of June 25, 1880,[27] between the Ministry of Crown Lands (in which department the Mennonites are placed) and the Mennonite community states, in its main points, the following, concerning 20 years of service exclusively in the forests:

The number of detachments is set at six.[28] Each detachment has a director ("Mennonit-Starschina"), elected by the Mennonite communities whose task it is, together with a few indispensable assistants, to supervise the Mennonite workers in their leisure as well as to direct the business affairs of the detachment. At the end of each month this Mennonite director presents a receipt for the wages which the Ministry of Crown Lands pays in the amount prescribed by the government.

§277 18. In spite of the gracious concessions of the imperial government, a migration was nevertheless begun, as indicated above. The waves of this movement splashed over into the Mennonite Brethren circles as well. Abram Unger was cold towards this movement; Johann Claassen, on the other hand, enthusiastic. He was carrying on energetic correspondence concerning the migration with Eduard Leppke (see above: "Baptists as super Mennonites"). He died, however, before carrying out his intentions to pioneer once more in a new, strange land. God had no more assignments for him in America nor, indeed, in this world. Abraham Schellenberg finally also went in 1879 as is well known. He explained his position regarding this issue at a meeting of a General Conference of Mennonite Brethren in Andreasfeld, May, 1874. (According to the minutes): "He is attempting to settle the emotions and to delay the migration somewhat. Whoever did not feel called to serve in Russia should emigrate; those feeling otherwise, should remain." Furthermore, "every caution must be exercised concerning the migration since unfavorable news has also been received from America." We can see that Brother A. Schellenberg was no Leppke and no Sudermann. If a certain uneasiness and anxiety concerning the future in Russia (this is how the author heard him express it in 1879) tossed him to and fro and finally drove him to America, it was never held as a dogma. When he returned to Russia for a visit in 1887 he indicated that things had taken a different course in Russia than was earlier anticipated. God did not want him in Russia any longer but used him much and long in America; this has been the verdict of history.

§278 19. Documentary Supplements to "Military Service and Emigration."

1) Two letters from Theodor Hans, the pastor of the Evangelical (Moravian) Brethren congregation in St. Petersburg. (From Elder Abram Goerz's *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Forsteidienstes der Mennoniten in Russland* (A Contribution Concerning the History of the Mennonites in the Forestry Service of Russia). Gross-Tokmak, H. Lenzmann, 1907. With gracious permission from the publisher.

a) "To the elders and assemblies of the Mennonite communities in the provinces of Taurida and Samara.

"You and your congregations have been placed before a very serious decision due to the law concerning compulsory military duty. The implications of this law you and your authoritative bodies have clearly articulated. Your verbalized and written expressions against subordination to compulsory military service have been received by all the proper authorities with the assurance that the government is deeply concerned not to offend your conscience and to keep you and your communities in this country.

"The enclosed conciliatory proposal from the Commission for Compulsory Duty testifies to the Government's serious efforts to come to an understanding with you. The privileges of almost all other alien colonists regarding exemption from military service are completely suspended. However, because of the Commission's proposal, every Mennonite subject in the country is guaranteed a rather significant exemption. They are excused from military participation at the front, and from carrying weapons. (Instead) they are appointed for enlistment in the hospital service, military workshop service, etc.

"The situation into which you have been placed is a far more favorable one than that of your brethren in Germany, who are also compelled to serve on the transportation and baggage vehicles in the field. (There, unfortunately, they are also expected to carry arms even though for defensive purposes only.) What the government is suggesting for you in the present proposal is actually nothing which would make you party to the evils of war. Medical corps services and maintenance of military places of work (as long as these do not include weapons factories, etc.) are sooner suited for alleviating the evils of war and for that cause a Christian may extend his hand.

"It appears, however, questionable to you, dear brothers (regardless of the nature of your compulsory service), that you should relate in any way whatsoever to a law which deals with military involvement and taking up of arms. You believe that (even though indirectly) you are still thereby acknowledging war as justifiable. No more, actually, and no

more directly than when you pay for your personal duty with a recruitment tax, which apparently does not cause you anxiety as is evidenced by the conditions ('Privilegien') under which you settled in Russia.

"One thing I wish not to overlook, however. It gives you a deep concern to see your young men (exactly in those years which often are so determinative for the rest of life) torn from your midst and submitted to a totally strange influence in a very mixed environment. This concern I share with you also on behalf of our own young men from Sarepta. In the face of this, however, I must declare to you and myself:

1) That our trust in the fatherly protection of God will not deceive us if it moves us to earnest prayer for our youth.

2) That a much greater blessing is gained precisely in the disciplined cultivation of ethical-religious principles (which we are trying to impress upon our children) than in external protection and in an exclusion from every source of temptation.

3) That a momentary and temporary straying from the path of godliness (painful as it may be) does not necessarily imply a continuous apostasy from the spiritual heritage of our fathers.

4) That precisely the consciousness that our young men will need to be exposed to alien influences must necessarily have a lasting and sanctifying effect upon our training methods from earliest youth. I cannot maintain that these considerations will be able to allay all our fears but they will serve to quieten us by God's grace (since the necessity has arisen that our personal wishes must be sacrificed). I cannot help, dear brothers, seriously to ask you to consider, that perhaps in the gracious considerations which our government has allowed regarding your point of view, there is to be recognized the hand of God for your people. This hand may be pointing in the direction that you should not automatically decline all government service assignments and that you should not take advantage of the right to emigrate.

"I know that concerning the latter there is presently, in your circles, a great deal of serious and urgent promotion but it is not being done in the proper way—in the Spirit of God and to His glory. A number of domestic as well as foreign newspapers are reporting more and more concerning this agitation. Much of this agitation seems to me to be tainted with carnal zeal and servitude of man. Such things are very unbecoming in a religious community such as you are; they do not stand you in good stead. Cherished brothers, oppose such dangerous promotions (which taint your calling before God and mankind) in the Spirit of Christ and in the discipline of solemn, sensible deliberation

before God. Don't be taken in by the deception of such agitators who are clothed with a false spirituality. As faithful elders, protect your congregations as much as possible from confusing and agitating influences and trust in the assistance and leading of the Spirit of Truth who makes you free indeed.

"Dear brothers! You are expecting to leave your homeland again and to find citizenship elsewhere. I don't want to emphasize the sacrifices and hardships that will necessarily follow such a decision. If that were necessary for the sake of truth and the honor of God it would have been sinful for anyone to burden your hearts. One would have to say: 'Go in peace: The journey on which you go is under the eye of the Lord' (Judg. 18:6). In reality, however, I cannot find that it is your duty to leave. I do not want to address myself to the fact that His Imperial Majesty's government had declared its interest to keep you in this country, and that your departure would give it deep concern. This is, however, true—even if certain public writings have voiced other opinions—it is, nevertheless true. Permit me, however, to direct you to another point of view. By God's grace you have chosen to be a widespread blessed example to our country. You have been exemplary in the physical affairs of life such as your thriving, well-supplied homes and farms, your successful agriculture, animal husbandry, etc., your orderly communal and congregational life. Not only that but much more! God has placed you into your environment in order to be a real and living testimony to the blessings of God which come to a community which sincerely promotes moral values and the fear of God, disciplined restraint from all manifest sins and vices, concerned training of young people in the fear of God and the traditions of the fathers, prevention of all that might harm the common good or loosen the bonds of orderliness. Your calling lies in this noblest, ethical-religious sphere—it is a missionary calling. The great significance of this calling will not be disparaged by anyone who recognized the urgent need for such an example in our country and among its people. And even if in all honesty you admit, my brothers, that not all those in your circles are concerned about this calling—that the winds of emancipation are being felt amongst the youth of your communities as well—that the old, simple and genuine ways of your fathers are occasionally threatened by the spirit of our times—then you may rest assured that you nevertheless have a holy calling from God and you are still fulfilling it!

"Brethren! that comes from the Lord but it also makes you responsible to God, responsible to the calling which He has given you as it concerns this country. You cannot leave this country just like that—not without having God sever you inwardly and incontrovertibly from that calling. Exactly this turns the question of an obligation to

emigrate for conscience sake into the question of having the right to emigrate for conscience sake. It is from this standpoint that I implore you to test this matter before God. Save yourselves, I beg you, from a viewpoint which would imply that your migration constitutes a divine judgment for this land which necessitates your leaving! If others evaluate the circumstances in that way then let them justify themselves if they can. You, however, must not give occasion for such thoughts—they would seriously threaten your innocence and sincerity before God and man.

"Is it possible that the truth may be exactly reversed? That in the circumstances of your submission to compulsory military service there may be a godly discipline to be learned which you would not do well to overlook? [Is it possible] that, much rather, you should humbly accept this discipline and believe that the God of all mercy will respect your obedience and allow you and all your congregations to harvest the peaceable fruit of righteousness, to be strengthened in the Spirit and also to strengthen that which is in danger of dying?

Your Theodor Hans"
St. Petersburg, January 15, 1873

b) "Dear Brothers!

"I recall making the promise to notify you when the bill which is so important to both of us (concerning the compulsory military service law) would come before the Imperial Council. Today I am in a position to write you.

"Count Heyden, the well-known chief of the Commission had promised to notify you through me as to the time when a written petition from you to the Imperial Council would be most timely and effective. I have waited until the present for news from Count Heyden but without results. Now I believe I cannot wait any longer without adversely affecting your interests.

"Naturally it depends upon what your opinion is presently. Minister Valuiev, as you know, counselled that you entrust your cause to His Majesty the Tsar's good will alone and spare yourselves further steps since your position is sufficiently known to the Tsar and other high officials. Should you, dear brothers, want to follow this guidance, then you would have to give up on a petition to the Imperial Council. I do not know if your conscience will permit this course of action and especially if your dear congregations will be satisfied with so very inactive a period of waiting.

"Therefore, it is my duty to inform you that in case you intend to present your concerns before the Imperial Council, the time may well be

here to set the machinery in motion. The petition to the Imperial Council would have to be written in the Russian language and addressed directly to the president of the Council, His Imperial Highness, Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaievitsch. Either the petition can be sent to the Grand Duke through the regular channels of the postal service—or, you may want to consider delivering the petition personally via two delegates who would, however, have good command of the Russian language in order to speak with the Grand Duke. I do not consider the personal delivery, however, to be of absolute necessity.

"What I have already said to you orally I must repeat here. It is of greatest significance that your petition to the Imperial Council be in the form of an all-inclusive general declaration on behalf of the Mennonites, that it not be signed by only a few individual congregations or elders but, rather, that it give the impression of a collective petition which expresses the opinion of the total Mennonite community.

"Should your viewpoint, meanwhile, have changed in the sense that the preponderant majority of your congregation and its members would want to comply with the mild form of military duty as it has been afforded you—then, of course, such a petition to the Imperial Council would become unnecessary.

"You know, dear brothers, my position toward you and your cause. I repeat that I would rejoice with all my heart if you would remain in Russia. Russia needs you and the responsibility which you have received from God for this country is a great one.

"Well, God counsel you with His Holy Spirit concerning this question and guide your decision for your best interest and for the honor of His Name. Greet your congregations with heartfelt love from your brother.

Theodor Hans,
Minister of the Brethren Church"

§279 2) "Memorandum of the Mennonites to the Government" presented by their deputies to the Adjutant General, the Count von Totleben, in St. Petersburg, November 15, 1875 (Taken from the same source as *#278*):

"Based on the truly paternal favor shown to us by Your Majesty, our most gracious Lord and Emperor, through the gracious acceptance of our petitions and desires, which we had the good fortune to present to Your Majesty through His Excellency, the Adjutant General von Totleben, and based upon the permission granted our most humble petition, to be able to voice our desires in a separate memorandum as to which form of service, among those permitted us, would be most suited to our conditions and most preferred by us, we venture in the name of our

congregations to voice our most humble desires and petitions in the following:

"1. After due consideration we and our congregations have arrived at the conclusion that the service in the forestry camps of Southern Russia would, for our conditions and abilities, be the most suitable form of service, and we would send our youths to serve in this fashion without hesitation. We would find it especially desirable were we to be able to plant new forests and administer them according to the regulations determined by the government through administrators drawn from our own midst. First of all, this would contribute greatly in calming our congregations, for we dare neither to hide it from ourselves nor keep it a secret from the government that the question of emigration is, unfortunately, still seriously agitating many of our people. Secondly, we would thereby be granted an opportunity to demonstrate our zeal to be of use to the state in our own way. In the case that we should be allowed to set up such a program in which, according to our views, we could best establish new forest plantations, we would most humbly make use of this gracious opportunity and present such a program to the most high government for its consideration and whatever application it would deem appropriate.

"2. Since the abilities and inclinations of our youth with regard to such service may differ, we most humbly request that our youths be granted the opportunity at the lottery to choose the form of service in accordance with their abilities and inclinations. It is to be assumed that although most will prefer to serve in the forestry camps, many will also choose to serve in the workshops. Having freedom of choice in this matter would contribute significantly to alleviating the fears of the congregations and cause many, who are already harboring emigration plans, to remain in Russia.

"3. We are convinced that there is a suitable means through which one might, with the greatest hope of success, now prevent the continuation of emigration. However, we hardly dare to make presentations to the exalted government in this regard. But since it may be in the government's interest to learn to know more fully the attitude of our church members and the motives behind the desire of many to emigrate, and since we stand in the firm hope that the exalted government will not regard that which is expressed here to be a demand but rather a most humble request and presentation, we nevertheless dare to do so, especially since both parties to the petition—both the restless group, which believes that it must make its remaining in the fatherland conditional upon the success of the petition, as well as the peaceful group dedicated to Russia alone, which feels itself forced to do everything in its power to restrain the stream of emigrants and to save the existing

settlements—trust in the paternal goodwill of the exalted government which has never withdrawn this goodwill from her children because of their most humble petitions. This means is the constantly available free right to emigrate. The following are the reasons cited in favor of such a policy: every Mennonite is more or less aware of the sacrifices, difficulties, indeed even persecution under which our forefathers defended their confession of faith and passed it on to us, and nearly everyone knows what he must do in order to be able to pass this confession of faith on to his children and their descendants. For our fathers, too, left home, hearth and fatherland for the sake of their confession of faith, and only in Prussia, and then in Russia, our current fatherland, did they find a haven. Even if the form of service we are forced to accept is not in opposition to the fundamental principles of our faith, it would nevertheless disturb the family heads to bind themselves irrevocably to a land and deprive their descendants, under pressing circumstances, of the possibility of making a decision in line with the confessional stance of the Mennonites. If, however, he and his descendants were to retain the personal freedom to emigrate unmolested, even at the expense of a part of their property, neither he could accuse himself, nor could his children and their descendants direct accusations against him for having remained in the country. Should the door to emigration be irrevocably closed to him and his descendants after the ten-year period of grace had come to an end, however, this would create fears and concern and cause many to seek a land where they might find greater legal freedoms, even though not a surer guarantee for their non-resistance principles. [29]

"4. In view of the conscription of our youths into the service we dare to request two things, both of which are of the greatest importance to us: 1) that special lottery districts be established amongst us, [30] and 2) that the same privileges pertain to our conditions of service that pertain in other areas of service with regard to education and the voluntary [31] decision to enter the service.

"5. In our submission to His Most Exalted Excellency, von Totleben, we expressed the request that our schools, which have till now been left to our free supervision and immediate care by the most gracious monarchs of the Russian Empire, retain this relationship and be granted the rights of other schools in the empire which compare with them. At the same time we obligate ourselves, out of a sense of duty to our dear fatherland, to promote the language of the land with the greatest of diligence. Naturally, we could not expect that this matter would be immediately decided upon along with the law concerning our service obligations. Nevertheless, we find ourselves at present forced, by the prevailing conditions, to request that the question be resolved by a

legally binding decision. Because, as the result of serious consideration of our future, we have more and more arrived at the conviction that this point is of decisive importance and immeasurable significance to us, indeed also with regard to our services vis-a-vis the state, we dare herewith to request a favorable consideration of this our petition."

§280 3) A letter from church Elder Jakob Wiebe[32] of the Krimmer Mennonite Church. (From the original):

Karassan, February 27, 1876

"To the venerable Elder Johann Wiebe, Schoenau near Samara.
Much beloved brother in Christ Jesus!

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

". . . That our achievements have been recognized in military law is to our greatest benefit. This, especially, gives our non-resistance a firm basis in Russia. Nor can our non-resistance be at all endangered through this; on the contrary, it is now particularly protected by the same. This law absolves us from everything related to carrying arms whereas other nationalities and denominations have been bound to it. What our service will be called and how one is to regard this? What do we care? Those are side issues. We have been legally recognized as nonresistant Mennonites and that according to military law. This recognition separates our service from the military administration and gives it a distinction which has to do with peaceful pursuits throughout.

"I can not agree at all with those who suspect something unwholesome for us everywhere. I believe, rather, that the laws concerning us have been thoroughly thought through for our benefit and that they have taken our non-resistance into consideration even more than we ourselves are able to comprehend or evaluate. Indirectly not to come into contact with any military affairs is impossible because His Majesty the Tsar has to authorize all laws and ordinances no matter of how peaceable a nature they may be. Still he is and remains the highest military commander in Russia and the anointed person to whom we must render obedience and honor according to God's explicit command. And this is how it is in every country, no matter what its system of government.

"Russia has done everything it could for us—at least much more and in a wiser manner than one could ever have hoped. It has readily gone along with our concerns about non-resistance and our Confession of Faith as a whole. Naturally, in the interest of governmental justice, it could not take every desired convenience and many an idiosyncrasy that was voiced into account no matter what our wishes might have been.

After all, should this country favor us unjustly now, then it might well show injustice in opposition to us at some other occasion. As long as we are so near to the heart of our Tsar and Tsarina that their gracious effusion over our people brings tears to our eyes—then things will go well with us in this land which has been so singularly blessed by God. To leave this country (at the very moment when God, through our gracious ruler, has provided a way of escape from our difficulty) would mean grieving our conscience (if we are to be Christian in every respect) and would be a crime against mankind as well as our own flesh and blood—and unjustifiable before God. What would Menno Simons not have given for such an asylum in his years as a fugitive? Oh, we Mennonites ought to be better acquainted with history. A knowledge of the past can make the present bearable for us and unlock the future concerning some things. Do not think, however, my beloved brothers that my confidence is dictated by a concern for carnal comfort! No, if I had wanted to pay attention to the flesh I would have left Russia long ago. My situation here is an extremely difficult one. My congregation is scattered in four different areas which are over 50 versts removed from one another. I have to preach every Sunday and holy day. The shortest journey always takes about three days and my farming operation has to sacrifice one carriage for this task. Besides this I am poor and support a large family. My situation, then, is not exactly enviable, as you can see; it could not have become worse on the other side of the ocean. If I had wanted to think in human terms I would have taken advantage of the migration in order to escape these difficult circumstances since I was promised free transportation and support over there. What's more, I would have been able to show an aura of holiness and martyrdom before the world, whereas in contrast (since I decided to follow truth), I have fallen prey to many a slandermonger. But I have a conscience and I stand before God; I must obey and give account to Him, not the foolish world! I consider it my duty to remain where God has placed me. It will not be enjoyable to send our young men into service but we are in the world and there one finds much that is not enjoyable or easy. Many a person may feel conscience-bound to go; I feel conscience bound to stay—as long as Russia does more (for us) than any other country I will continue to regard this as an unmistakable sign for taking up our position exactly here, and that it is entirely God's will that we be here. We are to be the salt of the world: Russia is also a part of the world and salt is needed here as much as anywhere else. I am saying this to show that we are on firm, biblical ground when we remain (here) under circumstances as we have them now and in the face of such a clear sign from the Lord of the church. If we were to leave a land where people are sincerely accommodating and desirous of keeping us at all costs, it would be counter to God's decrees for us, even if it were possible. (Where we are

driven away we (obviously) cannot stay—we would finally have to leave the earth. . . .) But we are to be in the world. People always talk about what we have all lost through the abrogation of our Charter of Privileges! This I cannot see at all, rather, I believe we gained much more than we lost. The achievements which our brotherhood has gained in Russia are unequalled in our history. With the addition of this law concerning our responsibility, this great empire, including the Tsar at its head, concedes that the article concerning non-resistance in our Confession of Faith is biblical. Earlier we were tolerated as a sect, now, however, we have become a recognized religious party whose unique confession of faith is totally secured by law. The door to religious freedom has been opened in Russia. Those living a few years longer will witness great things in this country which the Lord of the Church has destined for greatness. Lightning is flashing everywhere already, many a circumstance will bring hardship for us too, but we are moving toward the Kingdom of God and this shall be our comfort during the perilous times of our life. Our prayer in these last days must resound more and more fervently and loudly before heaven: 'May your Kingdom come!' and, it will come. Brothers, it shall come soon—despite the devil, the world or hell! And then, if God wills, we will no longer be limited to a certain place but will see one another face to face. O brothers, what a hope! What consequences will all of this have for our brotherhood in the future? Who can presume to answer that now! I know one thing alone: if we have the real essence and strength and spirit of non-resistance in us—then Russia is least likely to force us into arms. And if we lose this real essence there is not a state in existence, be the laws what they may, which will be able to keep us non-resistant. Not even America with its scum of humanity.

"Russia has spoken and done her part. Now it is up to us to do our part, among other things, especially to provide good Christian schools. I am not particularly thinking of higher schools, but rather, better ones, schools where the child is trained to become a real, Christian, humble, rational, practical and unpredjudiced person; not like certain know-it-alls, to put it mildly, who have learned everything, but do not know how to practice it in daily life and consequently also have nothing for eternity. This was also entirely the viewpoint of his eminent excellency.

"The emigration, unfortunately, continues. Up to 100 families, it is said, are preparing themselves for spring, including my gray-haired parents-in-law. In the beginning some religious considerations may have contributed towards this cause but that is no longer the case. At this time there is only the attraction of friendship, the (hopefully) golden mountains, curiosity and, most of all, the fear of sending their sons into service. Mostly the people leaving are those who have no understanding

of non-resistance or Christianity. Then pride also plays a part, and that particularly with the more prominent ones: 'Now the Russians are serving us; later, however, we are to serve them!' they say—and, that they cannot accept. These are all ignoble and unjustified motives which consequently allow nothing good to be hoped for. In a word, the migration was poisoned right at its roots and continues to poison itself even further. This becomes increasingly clear now and is evidence that it was started at the wrong time and without God. Still others begged the police for written permission, which was obviously denied, to shoot down bad people who might show up in the village at night. They wanted to do this through the eight-fold guard which prior to their departure they had furnished with loaded rifles. This was detected by neighbors who became suspicious of their behavior. Nevertheless, these individuals emigrated because of non-resistance, a fact they did not fail to impress upon anyone who was in the least inclined to listen. If there is any integrity in that kind of action, then there are no lies in the world. No, the foundation must be dug much deeper than that; otherwise, nothing will help—no migrating and no remaining. The devil then has an easy time bringing us down no matter where we are . . . .

"Whether I have answered all of your questions, dear brothers, I don't know; much less whether it was done correctly. Who, after all, is able to judge his own case? Of this much, however, I can assure you: what I have reported is my very deepest conviction and I have had no gain in mind except the welfare of my brothers . . . .

Please accept hearty greetings from all of us.

Your brother in Christ,
Jakob Wiebe
Elder of the Krimmer Mennonites."

J. Wiebe was a brother to Philipp Wiebe, the former chairman of the "Agricultural Association" and first chairman of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board. Jakob Wiebe had been a teacher at the Halbstadt District (later, Secondary School) around 1880.

§281 20. The opinion of this author, as he recorded it some years ago in the already completed preceding passages, has altered significantly in favor of Mennonites in North America concerning their intellectual worth. This was due to very recent studies of the conditions among the North American Mennonites and more intimate acquaintance with their leading men. Our opinion concerning the military service of Russian Mennonites, however, has not changed in the least. We consider this service now, as earlier, to be totally in keeping with the Gospel of Christ.

21. Forestry Service of the Mennonites in the present (1910): §282

a) We cannot go into the various minor changes which came about during the course of events in this matter from 1880 until the present (that is, a 30 year period). Essentially, especially externally, everything took place within the framework stipulated earlier and on the basis previously mentioned. Around 1000 young Mennonites serve as "drafted workers" at eight forestry camps and one phylloxera-detachment.[33] (Several years ago the number was already 1,100—presently it is 894. The decrease in number stems from a general cut-back in the length of active military service from four to three years—actually, two years and eight months.) For closer observation, we will focus on several of the incidents which appear most significant to us. And this, essentially, according to the "Annual report of the authorized representative of the Mennonite Churches in Russia concerning matters of support for the forestry service in the year 1909." The "authorized representative,"[34] commonly called the forestry president or simply president, is lawfully elected by all the Mennonite groups during meetings of the civic (not congregational) assemblies from volosts, individual villages or groups of villages which did not belong to a Mennonite volost, e.g., Schoenwiese, Memrik, etc.; or, from "Assessed Regions." (See #8, 15 and article 23 of the minutes of May 5 and 6, 1910.) The authorized representative is the administrative deputy of the "assembly of delegates of all Mennonite churches" and the representative of the total body of Russian Mennonites in matters concerning forestry service. He receives authorization from each electoral group ("volost," etc.) and all these authorizations are then sent to the central authorities concerning this matter. (In this case the authorities are the Department of Forestry of the Ministry[35] of Agriculture and Crown Lands.) The decisions of the "assembly of delegates" are final and binding for every Mennonite concerning tax obligations for this matter. (Compare further, below: "Introduction"—#288.) The Mennonite communities in total, together with the assembly of delegates are autonomous in this matter under authority of the central government and the general jurisdiction of the empire. The assembly of delegates for forestry affairs is totally authoritative in this matter for individuals or special "regions." The ecclesiastical (spiritual) "General Conference of Mennonite Churches in Russia"[36] has been given the responsibility of the spiritual oversight and the right to bring petitions or grievances before the federal authorities. It also has the responsibility of evaluating the candidates for chaplaincy at the forestry camps as well as the responsibility for spiritual care at these camps through visits from itinerant preachers. Besides this, it was given the right to express a general grievance vote or vote of commendation but had no right to "interfere" with

administrative or economic affairs. Business regulations and economics (being "civic" matters), as far as they concern the [Mennonite] community, have prudently been left to "civic" (denominationally, however, exclusively Mennonite) representatives. This already became evident in the fact that State Councilor Bark (see *#276* above) sought the approval of the church elders and colony administration (as General Totleben did earlier) concerning the formal treaty between the Mennonites and the government. On the other hand, he concluded business and legal settlements with the volost administrative bodies (Halbstadt, Gnadenfeld, Chortitza, Nikolaipol and Schoenfeld). In the event that the "General Conference" which was the spiritual authority [37] for all the Mennonites in Russia should find that—in matters relating to forestry, i.e., in the question of compulsory service—the Assembly of Representatives (authoritative for the total Mennonite community) or its agent (the "authorized representative" for the Mennonite communities in Russia) were acting contrary to Mennonite religion or their lawfully permitted rights—or, if a governmental authority was forcing the aforementioned agencies to act against religion or the law—then they had the right to register grievances before the highest state authorities and to petition before His Imperial Majesty. This is how it has always been, particularly in the whole matter concerning military service from 1870 onwards. The ecclesiastical deputations were always treated as competent; their most humble petitions resulted in the sending of his eminence, Mr. Totleben, and all the consequences which this entailed. Totleben spoke first of all at the places of worship ("in the name of the Tsar") surrounded by the ecclesiastical authorities and by the brotherhood—then he took care of legal matters with the civic administrations in conjunction with ecclesiastical and civic representatives. That the ecclesiastic authorities can command nothing nor forbid anything where "Mennonite" matters become "civic," is a consequence of the Mennonite-apostolic principle: "not as those who lord it over the people." That this authority is extraordinarily strong, however (when it is spiritually and intellectually on a high level), stems naturally from the fact that all civic agencies are made up of "brethren" who are members of one or another congregation of the total Mennonite community. It is unthinkable, therefore, that the determining majority of all the civic agencies could go continually against this majority of ecclesiastical representation. (Both representations sit together simultaneously, being members of the civic as well as the congregational assemblies.) This kind of unity is, in the final analysis, particularly guaranteed (we believe), since the church parishes may choose to elect voting members for the "General Conference" from their congregational membership. (These elected members may be non-preachers.) Should an irreparable schism

ever develop, then (if His Imperial Majesty does not help out) it remains for the party which believes it has been wronged to resort to migration again as it occurred in 1874 and many times before that. This is the typical, traditional Mennonite way.

b) Those Mennonite youths in Russia who were obligated to military duty at eight different camps are under spiritual care of an equal number of "manager-ministers." The phylloxera group has been promised "occasional" visits from itinerant ministers and complains bitterly about the infrequency of such visits. However, they also work for only six months a year. They assemble to read sermons amongst themselves and, when the group composition is an appropriate one, they also have Bible studies, prayer meetings (more in smaller groups), and times of singing. Their spiritual nurture is being decidedly neglected! Spiritual supervision and training was one of the most important conditions upon which the Mennonite congregations went along with Totleben's propositions (see above, #274, 3). This was especially and solemnly granted through imperial statute in a governmental treaty with the congregations. (See above #275, 3 and #276 "Mennonite Elders.") In the "treaty" (#276) the "Mennonite elder," with his "supervision" (which in our terminology, really means spiritual nurture, soul care), is mentioned first ("together with indispensable assistants") and then reference is made also to giving guidance in agricultural affairs. Presently things have been reversed in this regard. Originally there was a manager and a minister at each forestry camp. Later, however, the negative element among the Mennonite farmers brought about a state of affairs where one and the same person (he had to be a bona fide minister sanctioned by the Mennonites) served as a manager as well as minister! One does not refer to such a person as the minister of a given forestry station but rather, as the manager; his name is not entered as minister in the accounts and records, but rather, as manager. The complaints of the "manager/ministers," and young men serving in the camps, are frequently bitter. Particularly sharp are the criticisms of former managers who have completed their service. Very few had a consitution strong enough to carry out both responsibilities very well. The "manager-minister," the "Papa," fatigued from the market trip; disturbed and often emotionally upset because of business transactions with all sorts of "christian" as well as "jewish" Jews; often viewed suspiciously and criticized by many a young "chap" who thinks he knows better—is now to conduct evening devotions with the already tired and yawning service men. On Sundays, also, the "manager-minister"who was tired and battered himself, was expected to conduct worship services with an equally physically fatigued detachment. He is §283

expected to exercise soul care and discipline, conduct Bible studies, reading hours, song times—and he does it, as best he can. At the outset there was one minister and one manager, then these two services were combined for economic reasons. We believe that one was given 800 rubles instead of 1,000 rubles for two. Now each "manager-minister" on the average receives 1000 rubles (see records) with free board and room and assistance for each school aged child! And what about the Mennonite itinerant minister? No secondary school teacher receives such a salary. Think of it: 1,000 rubles and not a single ruble needs to be spent for groceries! Could we not hire some teacher/ministers or retired missionaries for 500-600 rubles plus free room and board to serve as "ministers" and could we not hire some industrious young "manager" (for 400-500 rubles depending on the family's size) from the best of those who have completed (forestry) service? These men would be such who have a reputation for being industrious farmers and good Christians at home and they could then assist the "minister" as deacons. In view of the ¼ million annual expenditure, is this amount really such a determining factor? It seems to us that the present method of spiritual care is a great detriment to the holy cause.

§284 c) And these young people's conduct itself? It corresponds, more or less, with their home families and congregations. There are thoroughly "converted" young men who strive for holiness, the pride and joy of their "Papa."[38] Many are being converted (so the ministers report); many of the young men are genuinely spiritual "seekers." Quite a number are decent, dear "fellows" (this ["Kerls"] is what they like to call themselves); there are also some who are weak in manners and a few mean, detestable individuals who bring shame upon their comrades and their society and who are the source of grief and pain for their ministers and home congregations. One Mennonite minister says: "Our young men are much better than we may expect considering the conditions in our home congregations and the unsatisfactory spiritual care which we are providing." We have personally witnessed unpleasant or regrettable behavior on the part of our "Mennonite soldiers" on only very few occasions. (We have occasion to observe many of them without their recognizing us.) Many of them gave us much joy. In general we have received a surprisingly favorable impression of them. In spite of the plentiful, serious, hard and merciless criticism which has been expressed we are convinced that the grace of God is in this matter and it can (shall and must!) be elevated, honored, and sanctified. May the shepherds tend their flock! God bless our "fellows!" May He bless the Tsar and the people of Russia for such a gracious concession toward a very small, adopted child of an alien race and faith! May He teach the congregations (those in their membership who are spiritually alive and mature) above

all, to fulfill their duty towards their "hope for the future!" In spite of all this we still believe that we Russian Mennonites are, in this way, to be a "minister of peace." In order to achieve that, however, we will have to "climb upon a higher mountain" before God and mankind, Tsar and fatherland (with much greater Christian and civic faithfulness, wisdom and industry).

§285 d) The 1,000 young men (approx.) are supported by a poll tax and a property tax as the following record indicates: (Income tax is the subject of lively and vehement debate both privately and officially. We consider it to be the last word in wisdom and justice regarding this matter. What are we, the "intelligentsia," doing with our relatively high salaries: secondary school teachers, deaf and mute school teachers, physicians, lawyers, engineers, etc., etc.?). Below are the minutes of the "Decisions of the general assembly of delegates of the entire Mennonite congregations (of Russia), May 5 and 6, 1910."

"The authorized representative Mr. Claassen opens the session with a brief address and conducts a roll call of delegates. In attendance were—from Halbstadt: Abraham Isaak, Jakob Neufeld, Peter Friesen, Peter Neufeld, David Klassen, Jakob Renpenning and Colony Administrator Dietrich Dick; from Chortitza; Johann Thiessen, Kornelius Martens, Johann Reimer, Jakob Klassen, Peter Dick and Colony Administrator Jakob Wiebe; from Gnadenfeld: Gerhard Duerksen, Aron Rempel, Nikolai Esau, Peter Martens, Isaak Neufeld and Colony Administrator Jakob Duerksen; from Melitopol: Johann Neufeld and Wilhelm Klassen; from Nikolaipol: Franz Peters, Abraham Braun; from Nikolaital: Peter Funk; from Neu-Chortitza: Jakob Rempel; from Memrik: Kornelius Unrau; from New-York: Jakob Niebuhr; from Schoenfeld: Jakob Neufeld and Wilhelm Janzen; from Ohrloff (Sagradovka): Peter Siemens and Heinrich Duerksen; from Malyschin: Peter Wiens and Johann Bergmann; from Alexandertal: David Ewert and Hermann Riesen; from Ufa: Gerhard Neufeld; from Neu-Samara: Kornelius Unger; from Crimea: Peter Wall and Heinrich Dick; from the Caucasus: Alfred Lange and Gerhard Goerzen; from Terek: Gerhard Schmidt; from Orenburg: Jakob Bergen; from Omsk: Peter Petkau; from the city of Berdiansk: Wilhelm Rempel. Besides this, the following members with voting rights were present: Commissioner Jakob Dick and the members of the Council, Jakob Sudermann and David Dick; a member of the auditing committee, Heinrich Schroeder and eight 'managers' from the forestry camps (the latter without voting rights).

"Point 1. Elected as secretaries by the assembly are: Hermann Riesen (Alexandertal) and Peter Dick (Chortitza). 2. Upon examination

of authorizations, it is found that the authorizations of the delegates from Halbstadt and Schoenfeld do not conform with the format of a uniform church decision as it was worked out in 1909. The assembly declares that it cannot approve these authorizations. 3. Wilhelm Rempel, the delegate from the city of Berdiansk is recognized as a delegate by the assembly and the Memrik District is granted a second representative. 4. The authorized representative reports briefly concerning the economic and financial situation as well as the moral-religious conditions at the forestry camps and comments on our relationship to the government. 5. Mr. H. Schroeder reads the report of the auditing commission which the assembly ratifies. The assembly offers its gratitude to the commission. The report went as follows:

"The Auditing Commission has reviewed the accounts of the authorized representative as well as the individual managers of the forestry camps on April 5 and 6 of this year and we have found them entirely in order. In addition, the expense estimates of the authorized representative and of the managers for the year 1910 were thoroughly inspected. We recommend them for ratification by the assembly of delegates.

The cash balance below provides an overview of the income and expenditures for the year 1909.

Income:		
Balance on hand, January 1, 1909	rubles	2 091 43½
Income from taxes	rubles	150 502 24½
Income from the farm	rubles	22 150 20
Income for Crown work	rubles	18 423 55
Bills paid	rubles	28 599 38½
	Total rubles	221 766 81½
Expenses:		
The President's expenses	rubles	7 090 92
Expenditures for interest	rubles	9 002 15½
Expenditures at the forestry camps	rubles	195 341 98
Cash on hand, January 1, 1910	rubles	10 331 76
	Total rubles	221 766 81½

"Contrary to expectations the indebtedness has not only not become smaller but has increased by 28,599.38½ rubles. This unhappy circumstance is largely attributable to the fact that outstanding accounts have increased from 16, 982.03 rubles on January 1, 1909, to 40, 954.63¾ rubles on January 1, 1910. It would be advisable (in the opinion of the auditing committee) not to consider the outstanding accounts as sure sources of income—at least not the older accounts receivable; nor,

on the other hand, to enter the sum of outstanding accounts as expenses for a possible loan. [Debts, according to the minutes—174,348 rubles.]

"Moreover, there were no provisions made in the past year for new buildings at Chernoleska (Znamenka) but expenditures amounted to about 8000 rubles. The expense estimate was not exceeded, however, since there was a surplus of 12,000 rubles from crown work and the forestry farms: Instead we saved approximately 4,000 rubles. 6. The assembly of delegates elected a committee for inspecting the outstanding tax accounts. Members elected were: Abraham Isaak, Isaak Neufeld, Peter Wall, Jakob Wiebe, Wilhelm Klassen, Jakob Bergen, Gerhard Neufeld and Gerhard Schmidt. Secretary Johann Penner reads the estimate of income and expenditures for the support of the forestry detachments for the year 1910. This estimate is received and ratified by the assembly of delegates with minor alterations. At this point delegate Thiessen expresses the wish (which the assembly also supports) that a statement of accounts be prepared as soon as possible after the new year; that it be reviewed by the auditing committee and a sufficient number of copies be printed to be made available for the delegates. A report (approved by the committee) from the authorized representative concerning conditions and circumstances at the forestry camps as well as a printed copy of the 'Ordinance of the Minister of the Interior' (No. 18179 of October 30, 1903) are to accompany the aforementioned statement of accounts. 8. The assembly decides that the committee take the total indebtedness of the treasury (as projected for January 1, 1911) into account when determining the tax quotas. 9. The assembly considers it necessary to emphasize that it is the direct responsibility of the authorized representative administratively to motivate those Mennonites who are not subordinate to their local district administrators and who are not paying their share of the camp tax. 10 . . . . 11 . . . . 12 . . . . 13 . . . . 14. The request from the Gnadenfeld Mennonite Church to have its church fund freed from property tax is declined.

"Point 15. The assembly moves on to consider property tax regulations. For this year's assessment the following regulations shall be binding:

#1. In order to raise the funds, which the unique situation of the Mennonites in Russia necessitated in the performance of their compulsory military service, a general uniform property tax is initiated among those in question. 2. Every physical possession of every Mennonite in question is taxable—whether it belongs to a married couple, single persons, orphans, groups, societies, civic or ecclesiastical assemblies. The following shall be tax exempt: possessions up to the value of 500 rubles; schools, churches, hospitals, and other charitable

institutions as well as household furnishings. Note: the five funds and the so-called leasehold properties of the assemblies are not exempt from this tax. For those who rent out land in villages where particular prices for rental are determined (e.g., Hebrew colonies) the rental value is to be considered a possession. 3. The following shall serve as trustees of property: for orphans—their guardians, for groups and societies—their administrative council or the institution which serves this function; for civic communities—their colony administrators or village elders; for ecclesiastical assemblies—their church elders or their substitutes; for private persons—the person who has been authorized by the owner. 4. Property value is determined everywhere by means of a self-estimate before an assessment commission which is elected for that function. The basic principle is: that all items in one's possession are assessed according to their real value. Should the assessment commission find that the owner's self-estimate is not in keeping with this principle, then it proceeds to make an assessment of its own. The district administration, however, has the right to decide which of the two appraisals is to be taken as the real value for the items of possession. (Note #1. Industrial and commercial contractors are permitted to use the necessary figures for determining the value of their assets from the last inventory. It would not really be possible for them to conduct a special inventory during the term specified for determining property assessments. Note #2. For farmers, the grain price of October 1 will apply. Note #3. Cash monies, capital investments and interest bearing notes, according to current rates of exchange, must be declared without deductions. Note #4. Debts are subtracted from the sum total of the assets which have been ascertained. Note #5. Stored goods will be assessed at cost to the owner.) 5. A refusal of declaration brings with it the loss of appeal rights for the assessment of the commission which assessment has, in such a case, become mandatory. 6. In the case of willful concealment additional payments to the treasury are to be extracted from the assets in question for the entire demonstrable period of time and that at twice the quota amount of the current year. 7. The annual assessment takes place during the month of October and serves as a base for the taxation of the ensuing year. 8. The property owner (or its trustee) is to comply with the mandatory assessment after receiving notification from the assessment commission. 9. In order to facilitate assessment the Mennonite population of Russia has been divided into assessment districts. (These, in turn, have been divided into assessment groups where necessary.) 10. Geographic proximity is the basis for group divisions. Groups which live close together or have common administrative ties form a district. 11. The assessment districts are determined by the general assembly of delegates; assessment groups are

determined by the local district administration. 12. Each assessment group elects an assessment committee from its ranks. This committee is appropriately to list the assets of the group according to instructions and to deliver this list to the district government. 13. Lists for properties will be prepared according to format determined by the general assembly of delegates. 14. Each assessment district (which is represented by the group commission) elects seven persons from its own membership to form the district governing body. 15. Each assessment commission elects a chairman from its membership. 16. The district governing body has the responsibility of collecting the group lists, making certain that the assessments are made as fairly and uniformly as possible and that the lists are sent to the authorized representative. 17. Each district must defray whatever assessment costs may be incurred. 18. Personal reports which are made before the assessment commission, being made confidentially, will be held in strict confidence. 19. In order to facilitate leadership in the total assessment operation the authorized representative is given an assistant who is called the assessment commissioner. This assistant is appointed and salaried by the general assembly of delegates. 20. The assessment commissioner's duties are: to examine the assessment work of the commission, to set up investigations concerning the same, to see if some taxable Mennonite people have been omitted from the list and to see to it that assessment is made uniformly in the various districts (for which purpose he is to visit the districts personally as often as possible). 21. Grievances may be registered with: (a) the district governing body, (b) the authorized representative, (c) the assembly of delegates. 22. The assessment commissioner participates in the assembly of delegates with full voting rights. 23. Individuals who cannot easily join a geographic assessment group are assigned to a particular district administration by the commissioner according to the individual's preference. 24. Should someone have fixed assets in several groups or districts then the property in question must be dealt with by the group or district in which it is located. 25. After receiving all the property lists from the various district administrations, the authorized representative calls a meeting of the executive committee of the assembly of delegates. This meeting is for the purpose of examining the lists and for determining a tax rate (which is in conformity with) cost estimates. 26. It is the duty of the district government in conjunction with the group administrations to collect the taxes and to deliver them to the authorized representative.

"Explanations concerning the above regulations: Concerning Point 2. Under schools one understands all buildings on the schoolyard, including teacherages, which have been built or acquired in order to supplement the school. Hospitals would include doctors' dwellings and

pharmacies when they (together with the hospital) form a medical complex. Concerning orphans in a given family the guardian or the parent who is still alive must fill out a special property list. As in the case of fire funds, so in orphan funds—the reserve capital is subject to taxation. Property lists which record a net value of under 500 rubles may be disregarded in the total estimates of our assessment group (not, however, in ascertaining the number of group members). Concerning #4. The grain which has been planted in fall counts as a property item. For determining the real value of land or the value of all other property the average selling price of the previous year shall be used as a basis. Concerning #11. Regarding the boundaries of the various assessment districts it is the responsibility of bordering district administrations to reach agreement. Concerning #12. Property lists are to be made in duplicate. One copy goes to the district government and one remains for the group. Concerning #16. The property lists will be examined individually by the district administration in the presence of the group commission. Then, a group list will be prepared from these lists following the same format, and these will be sent to the authorized representative. Concerning #17. After the authorized representative has passed on the tax rate (as determined by the executive committee) to the district administration, he, in turn, works out a taxation rate which will take into consideration the various assessment expenses incurred by the district. Concerning #26. In cases where the administration experiences opposition they notify the authorized representative. They then receive a receipt book from the authorized representative and each taxpayer then is receipted from this book. Supplement—Each owner is obligated also, to record (in the property list) the number of persons between the ages 14 and 60 which make up the family of which he is the head. The rule is that all of those persons must be counted who have fully become 14 to 60 years of age in the first half of the current year. [These pay 50 kopeks per year.]

"Point 16. The commission for examining outstanding accounts has resolved that the outstanding accounts in Ufa which belong to those landowners who are currently still in possession of their property, should be reported by their authorized representative. No one will be required to pay a fine. The three villages in the Neu-Samara settlement (which have not enjoyed the 10 tax-free years which have been granted the other villages) may be exempted for the two tax-free years to which they are entitled. They will be totally absolved from all fines. The outstanding accounts of those who presently no longer live in Samara villages will also be cancelled. The remaining accounts outstanding, however, should be paid within the current year. This is unanimously accepted by the assembly of delegates. 17. Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld pledge themselves



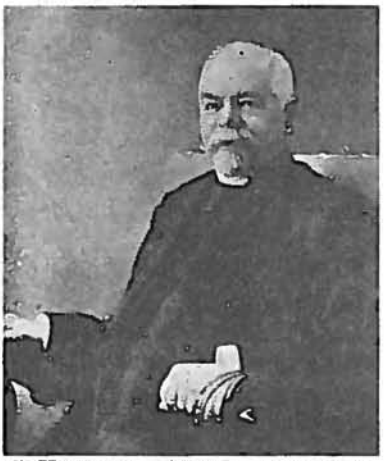
a) The Old-Berdiansk forestry service, formerly the "model plantation" of the Molotschna Mennonite district managed by Peter Fast and son from the time of Johann Cornies, Sr., until 1880: The detachment marching off to work.



b) The Phylloxera-detachment on the south coast of the Crimea, at their devotions.



c) The Phylloxera-detachment on the south coast of the Crimea: Pastoral visitation.



d) Hermann Abram Bergmann, Member of the third Duma.



e) David Johann Claassen, Authorized agent of the Mennonite churches of Russia in matters pertaining to the forestry service and of the Molotschna Mennonites in school matters.

to pay 3,125 rubles of the Orenburg settlement's outstanding debt. The remaining debts, however (after 1902), are to be paid by Orenburg itself. 18. The assembly of delegates resolves that the assessment lists of several villages from the Chortitza, Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld districts be compared with one another by a commission consisting of the colony administrators of the districts in question. This is to determine whether or not the assessments were carried out uniformly. 19. Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld concede that they should have conducted their 1908 assessment according to the regulations which the assembly of delegates had adopted. Consequently they are presently paying the difference between the taxes as computed by the districts earlier (not according to property tax) and the computations according to regulations for property tax in the previous year. The assembly of delegates can go along with this since both of these districts had been assured from the start that the compulsory tax levy might be corrected when subsequently these two districts would ascertain the real property value through an assessment. 20. Elected into the auditing committee were: Kornelius Unrau—Memrik, Peter Wall—Crimea, Peter Koop—Chortitza, Peter Siemens—Ohrloff, Heinrich Schroeder—Halbstadt and Isaak Neufeld—Gnadenfeld. 21. Since the current assessment commissioner is leaving his post, another commissioner is elected, namely, Johann Reimer (Einlage).

"Point 22. Assessment Districts: 1. Halbstadt; 2. Gnadenfeld; 3. Melitopol; 4. Chortitza; 5. Nikolaipol; 6. Nikolaital; 7. Neuchortitza; 8. Memrik; 9. New-York (Bachmut District); 10. Kharkov (properties, villages and industries in the Province of Kharkov); 11. Schoenfeld; 12. Schoenwiese; 13. Ohrloff (Sagradovka); 14. Malyschin; 15. Alexandertal; 16. Ufa; 17. Neu-Samara; 18. Crimea; 19. Caucasus (all the Mennonites in the northern Caucasus excluding the settlements in the Terek District); 20. Terek; 21. Orenburg; 22. Omsk; 23. Poland; 24. Volhynia; 25. District of Berdiansk; 26. Arkadak (the latest settlement of Chortitza Mennonites in the Province of Samara); 27. Pavlodar; 28. Barnaul [See p. 7 of the minutes: 'Mennonites in Kurland?].

"Point 23. Each tax paying Mennonite who is at least 21 years of age has voting rights in forestry service matters. He may not be elected until the age of 24, however. The number of delegates from each district is determined either by the number of persons or the amount of property. One delegate is allowed for every 1,000 persons or for property valued up to six million rubles. Each further delegate is determined by this full norm or by more than half of the same. Delegates are elected for a 3 year term. Half of the tax (which is to be collected in January of each year) consists of the total poll tax and half of the property tax. 25. The petitions of the settlers from Pavlodar and Barnaul concerning several years of tax

exemption from the forestry camp tax are denied [!!?]. 26. The assembly of delegates expresses its heartfelt thanks to the departing secretary, Johann Penner, for his many years of faithful service. 27. Concerning the Terek settlement the assembly of delegates decides to cancel their outstanding debts [incurred] prior to the initiation of the property tax.

"Signatures: D. Dick, P. Siemens, G. Duerksen, Gerhard Schmidt, Franz Peters, Jakob Klassen, Jakob Wiebe, Johann Reimer, J. Thiessen, Peter Funk, Peter Paethkau, G. Neufeld, K. Martens, J. Rempel, J. Niebur, Abram Braun, A. Lange, Johann Bergmann, David Ewert, Jakob Bergen, P. Wiens, Johann Neufeld, P. Wall, Jakob Renpenning, Gerhard Goerzen, Jakob Neufeld, David Klassen, Wilhelm Janzen, Jakob Sudermann, Jakob Neufeld, Hermann Riesen, Aron Rempel, Peter Martens, Commissioner Jakob Dick, Peter Neufeld, Peter Friesen, Nikolai Esau, Kornelius Unger, G. Doerksen, Peter Dyck. A duplicate of the original. Authorized representative: D. Claassen. Secretary: Johann Penner."

§286 e) The eight forestry camps and their manager—ministers: 1) Veliko-Anadolskoie, Abram Klassen; Post Office: Blagodatnoie, Ekaterinoslav. 2) Asovskoie, Bernard Fast; Post Office: Mariupol, Ekaterinoslav. 3) Staro-Berdianskoie, Johann Epp; Post Office: Melitopol, Taurida. 4) Novo-Berdianskoie (Dschekenlynskoie), Johann Bueckert; Post Office: Pokrovka, Taurida. 5) Vladimirovskoie, Kornelius Wiens; Post Office: Nikolo-Kozelsk, Kherson (or: Tiege Kherson). 6) Razynskoie, Gerhard Nickel; Post Office: Voznesensk, Kherson. 7) Sherebkovskoie, Nikolai Friesen; Post Office: Sherebkovo, Kherson. 8) Tschornoleskoie, Peter Heidebrecht; Post Office: Znamenka, Kherson. 9) The mobile Phylloxera detachment largely in Crimea, without soul care. Address of the current authorized representative: David J. Claassen, Felsental; Post Office: Halbstadt, Taurida.

f) The number of persons (according to the minutes) between the ages 14 and 60 in the year 1910 was 38,276. Property which was assessed and taxable: 230 million. (We are convinced that both numbers are too conservative.) Estimated expenses (including debt retirement) for 1910: 334,800.27¼ rubles.

§287 Supplement containing the resolutions of the assembly of delegates which are in force to this day:

"1886. Point 2: The election of the president (the authorized representative of the Mennonites) is conducted exclusively according to the lawful election procedure in which every tenth person participates. This is true also in those communities which do not form an independent

volost or in communities where it is customary to reach consensus with the total number of household heads.

"Point 5. As a supplement to point 2 it has been decided that the candidates for authorized representatives are to be elected from the three determining volosts, namely: Chortitza, Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld. Three candidates are to be elected by ballot from each of these volosts. [Based on the agreement with Bark *#267.*]

"May 3, 1901. Point 1. The Mennonite teachers who have been drafted into service are considered as reserves according to point 63(80) of the military regulations. They are to be exempt from camp taxes for the entire term of service since they are themselves in the service.

"Point 6. All delegates of the Mennonite volost and village communities receive reimbursements from the authorized representative according to the actual travel costs which they declare for the journey to the assembly and home again. These funds are taken out of the general treasury which is in the authorized representative's charge.

"1906. Point 5. The annual assembly considers it as indispensable to appoint a consultative commission of six members which the authorized representative calls to a counsel meeting whenever he needs to resolve important questions regarding matters of guidance for the task which the Mennonite communities have entrusted to him.

[N.B.! Food and clothing for those in the service is supplied by the Mennonite administration. The official menu, prepared by the "general assembly" is genuinely Mennonite—including "Schnetke" and "Plumemoos;" clothing (simple and becoming, hardly military, is reminiscent of schoolboy uniforms and often the "Mennonite soldiers" are mistaken for such) and food can almost be called luxurious.]

"9. In consequence of Point 5 of the resolutions of the assembly of delegates 1906, the assembly elects another committee. The resolution is altered in that the assembly is granted a free election for this commission. The term of service is to be three years. Elected by ballot were: the colony administrators of Halbstadt, Chortitza and Gnadenfeld and the former authorized representatives—Franz Peters, Jacob Suderman and David Dick.

"15. The assembly resolves that another commission be charged with the task of working out a statute concerning composition, concerning daily procedure and procedure in the house, concerning the competence of the assembly of delegates and concerning the election of delegates and of the authorized representative. This statute is to be presented to the next assembly of delegates for approval."

§288-9 Translation from the Russian

Introduction

Ministry of Agriculture and Crown Lands. Department of Forestry—Section IV—Table 2—October 30, 1903—No. 18178. To be delivered to Isaak Dyck (of Chortitza village) by the district police administration of Ekaterinoslav. Introduction: The honorable Minister of the Interior transmitted the correspondence (concerning a petition of the Mennonite congregations' authorized representatives—Isaak Dyck and Johann Thiessen) accompanied by a letter in the name of the honorable Minister of Agriculture and Crown Lands. This petition was to inquire about the legal stipulations concerning each Mennonite's obligation in making the annual payments for supporting the forestry detachments.

. . . . . .

After examination of the petition and comparison of the request with the laws concerning it, the Forestry department found the following:

According to Point 1 of the supplement to article 27 of the forestry decrees, 1893 edition, the Mennonites who settled[39] in the districts and municipalities of the empire up to January 1, 1874, were (after conscription into mandatory service) appointed to serve in the forestry detachments of the Ministry of Agriculture and Crown Lands. The cost of supporting the Mennonite forestry detachments, however (referred to under point 25 of the same law), is the responsibility of the Mennonite congregations and (this cost) is charged to their account.

Consequently, individual Mennonites who have withdrawn from this or that congregation[40], but who, according to their confession of faith, still belong to the total Mennonite fellowship (and for this reason are entitled to the privileges of [alternative] military service)—are not exempt from the taxes for supporting the forestry detachments which the Mennonite congregations (fellowships)[41] and are expected to pay according to the aforementioned law. This is so because the (tax) obligation is not incumbent upon the assemblies as an administrative or societal (communal) entity, but rather, upon the Mennonite congregations (religious fellowships) which form a uniform, recognized religious sect.

After this presentation had been laid before the honorable Minister of Agriculture and Crown Lands it pleased His Excellency to order that it be disclosed to the authorized representatives of the Mennonite congregations (fellowships), Isaac Dyck and Johann Thiessen, that: a new legislative directive concerning the duty of each Mennonite regarding annual payment for support of forestry detachments is not necessary because this obligation is presently stipulated under Point 25

of the supplement to article 27 of the forestry by-laws (1893 edition). According to this article all the expenses enumerated therein are the Mennonite congregation's (fellowship's) responsibility and are charged to their account. (That is, charged to all those persons who because of their confession of faith are enjoying the privilege of rendering (alternative) military service as stipulated in Article 27 of the forestry by-laws. Exempt from stamp taxation. On behalf of the director (signature). Section Chief (signature). The genuineness of the present copy of another copy is certified by the Halbstadt District Administration via signature and a stamp of the seal. January 19, 1909. Colony Administrator (Signature)—District Secretary (signature).

F.

ISSUES CONCERNING MATTERS OF FAITH IN THE MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD OF RUSSIA AT THE PRESENT TIME (1905 - 1910)

XXXIV.
NEW APPREHENSIONS WITH REGARD TO MATTERS OF FAITH

§290 1. As is generally known, the year 1905 brought a great upsurge in social thought and aspiration among all segments of the Russian population. A truly "political" movement did not emerge among the Mennonites of Russia. In comparison with the huge peasantry of the empire, their social and economic condition was so good (if not excellent), that they could not expect anything positive for themselves from a possible, more or less radical, governmental change. To the contrary, as a genuine Christian-conservative and generally bourgeois [1] group, ninety-nine out of one hundred Mennonites considered such words as "democrat," "democratic" with suspicion, foreboding ill, and from a democracy only evil was expected. (With this [attitude] the vast majority of Mennonites also condemned the party of the "Constitutional Democrats," even apart from their land-project; not to mention the other parties even further to the left.) Since they were obliged as voters to identify more closely with a party, they generally voted (we speak of the general public, not of certain personalities) for the party of October 17, or the "Octobrists," [2] because it promised not to interfere with the religion or nationality of minorities. One would have moved further to the right if there had not been a concern for freedom of religion and language in church and school. In view of such general social-political sentiments among our Mennonites, it is not surprising that a Mennonite in a South-Russian regional city was chairman of the department of the "Union of the Russian People" or of the "Truly Russian People" (even though they had often made fun of it). If the extreme confessionalism and nationalism of the "Truly Russian People" had not been manifested in such a crass manner, at least seventy-five percent of the Mennonites—"for the sake of the Tsar" and out of fear and antipathy to democracy, socialism, and

everything that smelled of revolution—would have been "Truly Russian People" in the monarchical, patriotic, and social sense. A few Mennonites—free thinkers—accepted a political platform (with the reservation of an "unshakable monarchy," the "indivisibility of the Empire," and the predominance of the Russian language as a bond of unity in all public institutions even among those of alien tongues; but, naturally, with unrestricted freedom of religion and the provision of teaching the mother-tongue in the schools "alongside of Russian," and also with a strong emphasis of "only peaceful and intellectual-moral means") which, in its political and social objectives (but not in strategy),[3] was like the program of the constitutional democrats—even before the appearance of the program of the party of "Peaceful Renewal" of Count Heyden. All of this was without consequences. A few immature young Mennonites,[4] torn from the native soil of their community, came under the influence of urban youth groups whose thoughts were still unclarified and in ferment, half-baked and illiterate educationally,[5] but swept along by political ideas. These Mennonites, with thousands of other unhappy young sons of our country , became the unfortunate victims of this contemporary movement. (Because of their ignorance, they had been blindly swept along by the wave.) The Mennonite Society of Russia experienced real progress in the area of schools, benevolent institutions, and journalism (cf. the special paragraphs, below). For a while champions of the German language in the schools made their appearance (a change in the relationship of the German and Russian languages, demanding a two-to-one ratio) as an opposition, provoked by the occasional authoritative and extreme imposition of the Russian element—with negative results, even there where people had been enthused for the Russian language with a kind of naive patriotism. By now, thank God, the straw-fire of this enthusiastic movement has burnt down, and people have once again arrived at a "Russian Mennonitism" using the German language in prayer, and making it predominant in the family, usually in the Low-German idiom, and with a thorough knowledge of the German and Russian language (as a goal).[6] This is evident, among other things, from the fact that all church documents which are related to the government are composed originally in Russian at congregational meetings, and then translated into German for the larger church community.[7] (Since these translations are usually made in great haste and then submitted to the printer, there appears in them a kind of German that can be put alongside the heavily ridiculed American "Pennsylvania-Dutch," which is certainly worse than the amusing German of the "Uncle" and "Aunt" letters in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*. In general, our Mennonite pulpit German is not pure.)

§291 2. A powerful movement first came into our Mennonite society through the so-called new order of the life of the state when people discovered that in the legislative bodies, the Imperial Duma and the Imperial Council, the question of religion (i.e., the laws concerning religion) should be subjected to review. "When reforms and liberties are provided for others in Russia, we Mennonites are always short-changed" some claimed, remembering the abolition of serfdom (1861) which resulted in a lowering of the social and judicial status of Mennonites, as well as of all colonists. They were put on the same level as the new peasant class (1870) and subject to the new military law (1874) which, for the vast majority of the country, was far more wise and just than the previous one. The Mennonites, however, lost their absolute freedom from military service. Deputies were elected: Elder Isaak Dyck, Chortitza, and Elder Abraham Goerz, Ohrloff, to enter into contact, at the appropriate time, with the legislative bodies and administrative federal authorities. It was feared that the "democratic" first and second Dumas would infringe on the military privilege—"nonresistance." But the matter took a completely different turn: there was a threat of a troubling change in the internal self-administration of the brotherhood. The matter is clearly discernible (in its essence) in the documents and related items presented in the following chapter.

XXXV.
STEPS TAKEN FOR THE PRESERVATION OF MAXIMALLY UNRESTRICTED INTRA-CHURCH INDEPENDENCE OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

§292 1. A legislative project of the Minister of the Interior concerning those of another faith was brought to the attention of the authorized brethren, Elder Isaak Dyck and Elder Abraham Goerz, by the member of the third Imperial Duma, Mr. Bergmann. This resulted in a trip of these men to St. Petersburg, and later to a consultation of all church-administrative councils of the Molotschna (of the older Mennonite, as well as of the M.B. and Evangelical M.B. congregations—see below) in Alexanderwohl on February 7, 1908 (and other consultative meetings). The nature of the legislative project and the position taken by the Alexanderwohl assembly and all other Mennonite consultations is seen in the following resolution, which was accepted eventually by all other Mennonite church groups of Russia in various gatherings. As a result of this document and its consequences, and for other reasons, various statutes were added which are given in #293 and 294. We present the document of February 7, 1908, in translation.

§293 A. "The Position of the Mennonites with regard to the Question of Freedom of Faith and Propaganda.

"I. a) With regard to the question of freedom of conscience, as far as it relates specifically to the Mennonites, we have no other desire than that this freedom, which we have enjoyed in Russia for more than 100 years, also be granted to us in the future.

"b) In the code of laws, Vol. XI, Part 1, Division 3, articles 1104 and 1105, the Mennonites are listed together with other Protestant denominations, which implies that in the law Mennonites are recognized as a Protestant denomination or 'fellowship' like the Reformed or other Protestants, and are not considered to be a sect; in the projected legislation, however, which has been presented in the Imperial Duma by the Minister of the Interior, we are designated as such. Any restriction of the rights hitherto granted unto us would inhibit the sound development of spiritual, moral and congregational life.

"II. Christ's command: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations," etc., we understand to mean that every Christian is obligated to spread the truth of the Christian faith, or, in other words, to preach the Gospel to all nations. We believe firmly in the power of the Word of God, according to the statement of the Apostle Paul, Romans 1:16: 'For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith.'

"III. However, we abstain from any active propaganda among members of other Christian denominations, whether this is understood as imposing our distinctive teachings on others (in order to lure such into our fellowship), or as agitating by extolling our teaching at the expense of other Christian teachings, coupled with a defamation of the latter.

"IV. We are deeply convinced of the truth that only the free proclamation of the Gospel in its original simplicity and purity is able not only to enlighten man unto eternal life, but also to bring about the blessed new order of the civic life, so keenly desired by all of us, and to establish immovably the All-Russian throne, ordained of God, as it is stated in I Timothy 4:8: 'godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life, and also for the life to come.' The true followers of the gospel act in their life according to the words of the Apostle Peter, first epistle, chapter 2:17: 'Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.'

"Alexanderwohl, February 7, 1908. The original in Russian has been signed by: 'Abraham Goerz [elder of the Ohrloff Church], Jakob Toews [elder of the Lichtenau Church], David Schellenberg [elder of the Rueckenau M.B. Church], Gerhard Regehr [elder of the Pordenau Church], Heinrich Guenther [elder of the Molotschna Evangelical

Mennonite Brotherhood, Lichtfelde Church parish], Jakob Reimer [minister of the M.B. Church, Rueckenau], Jakob Esau [minister of the Alexanderkrone Church], W. Neufeld [minister of the Gnadenfeld Church, teacher of religion at the Halbstadt Pedagogical Secondary School], Johann Penner [minister of the Lichtenau Church], Isaak Ediger [associate elder of the Evangelical M.B. Church, Lichtfelde], Daniel Janzen [minister of the Pordenau Church], Peter Janzen, Heinrich Unruh [elder of the Halbstadt Church], Johann Schartner [elder of the Alexanderwohl Church], David Claassen [minister of the M.B. Church, teacher of the Halbstadt Pedagogical Secondary School], Gerhard Epp [minister of the Neukirch-Ohrloff Church], Johann Peters [minister of the Margenau Church (?)], Gerhard Plett [at that time newly-elected elder of Margenau Church], Johann Goerzen [leading minister of the Waldheim Church], J. Duerksen [minister of the Margenau Church], Heinrich Peters [elder of the Schoensee Church], P. M. Friesen [minister in Sevastopol].[8]

"The declaration in hand has been agreed upon by the ecclesiastical representatives of the Molotschna Mennonite Churches at the consultation held in the church in Alexanderwohl on February 7th. It is desirable that every elder or leader present this (document) to his congregation. Because time is of the essence, the result should be sent in to Elder Abraham Goerz, Ohrloff, by February 18, if possible, so that it may be submitted to the Mennonite member of the Duma, Mr. Bergmann. Chairman of the Consultation, Elder Heinrich Unruh."

B. *"Explanatory Supplement to Document: The Position of the Mennonites in the Question of Freedom of Religion and Propaganda."*[9] §294

A. Concerning the Ecclesiastical Legal Status of the Mennonites.

"In the statutes of the Russian Empire, only the articles 1104 and 1105 (Volume XI, Division 3, edition of 1896) deal with the legal status of the Mennonites. In the articles referred to, the following designations are applied: 'denomination,' 'Ecclesiastical Rules and Regulations,' 'spiritual teachers,' and to the latter is ascribed a 'priestly dignity,' whereas in the projected legislation of the Minister of the Interior, Sub No. 1471, we are called a 'sect.' In the fundamental laws of the Empire, this ascription is not given to us. To be sure, we are described as a sect in several other places, as, for instance, in article 179, Vol. IV of the military law, and in the supplement of the same of May 14, 1875, concerning the Mennonites; but, according to our judgment, such a designation contradicts the literal meaning of the fundamental law about denominations (Vol. I, Division 1). Since the beginning of the settlement of Mennonites at the close of the eighteenth century, until the seventies

of the last century, our religious fellowship has been called the 'Mennonite Brotherhood' in written communications of Russian authorities (alongside the so-called Moravian Evangelical Brotherhood organized by Count Zinzendorf). Neither in the Charter of Privileges granted by Tsar Paul I in 1800 (of which a substantial part has been incorporated in the mentioned articles 1104 and 1105), nor in the Colonial Decree which constitutes the second part of Vol. XII of the Code of Laws, are we called a 'sect.' The complete equality of the Mennonites with other Christian denominations is, among other things, also confirmed through the articles of the Colonial Decree with respect to schools. Here the fathers (Catholic), the pastors (Lutheran and Reformed), and the ecclesiastical ministers of the Mennonites are all obligated to supervise the religio-ethical training of youth, an obligation which to this day belongs to the clergy of those of other faiths among the (former) German colonists, as this has been reiterated in the highest decrees of 1881 and later.

"In Article 1104 the reference is not to 'rules and customs' of this sect, but to 'church' rules and customs. According to Article 1105, the ministers of the Mennonites practice the duties of their office not according to the rules of their 'sect,' but of their 'denomination.' In the same point there is also an allusion to their 'priestly dignity,' a designation which in the spirit of Russian legislation cannot be applied to the leader of a sect.

"From such form of the text and the codification of the law during the years 1800 and 1801 about the Mennonites, it is clearly evident that Imperial legislation does not view the Mennonites as a Protestant 'sect', but as one of 'several communions of Protestant confession.' In this number, under a general heading, the 'Evangelical Reformed Church' is mentioned in first place (p. 185, Division 3). In general, the concept of 'sect' as applying to Christians of other faiths is foreign to Russian legislation; it only knows of sects which are composed of persons who have seceded from the Orthodox Church. All other religious communions recognized by law are designated as 'denominations,' which are divided into two main categories: Christian and non-Christian. The Christian [denominations] are divided, however, into orthodox and those of other faiths or foreign denominations. In this latter category all branches of the Protestant confession (see note to Article 779) constitute, in a certain sense, a common Protestant denomination in the eyes of the lawgiver. This is also implied in the general caption of Book II, Part 1, Vol. XI. (The statute on Ecclesiastical Affairs of foreign denominations.)

"To count our communion (with basically Protestant views and rites) among the new sects, which have seceded from the Orthodox Church, would impose upon us entirely new and strange forms of church life.

These would be contrary to the 'church regulations and customs' on the basis of which we have lived for centuries (even prior to Menno Simons, who died in 1559, and from whom we derive our present name) in foreign countries, and for more than one hundred years in Russia (since 1789). Only on the basis of the solemn promise of the inviolability of the absolute independence in our church life 'for eternal times' through the great Tsarina (an independence which has, until this day, been graciously, sacredly and faithfully guarded by all Russian tsars) have our fathers entrusted themselves to the protection of Russian suzerainty. As a so-called, United Old-Evangelical, 'Mennonite Brotherhood' with its church leadership (the spiritual ministers, Article 1105), our ancestors have come into the new fatherland. From this Brotherhood, on the basis of the one imperial law which applies to us, and based on the one (in essence) Old-Evangelical confession of the faith, new congregations (brotherhoods, church-parishes) are established, with the same common church rights and with an uninterrupted spiritual leadership, elected 'from the body of the fellowship' or brotherhood through its members and confirmed by the (church) elders [presbyters].

"With regard to government recognition of our church leaders, which is referred to in the projected legislation of the Minister of the Interior, we desire to abide by the 'Rules of our Confession' as practiced until this day. Until now the respective authority has only demanded information[10] about those church officials who have kept the church records. Until this day the government has not interfered in any other aspect of the internal ecclesiastical affairs of our church fellowship.

"B. The Church Leaders of the Mennonites

"Our church leaders are not called in a superficial manner. They are first of all elected by the respective congregation (brotherhood, church parish) in a solemn manner, with prayer, as they meet in their place of worship. They are chosen from the ranks of such persons who have demonstrated their Christian character in word and conduct, and who also possess the necessary knowledge of Christian doctrine, as well as the gift of instruction. This general knowledge is acquired by them in attending various types of schools, both on the lower and higher level. However, the doctrines of faith are mainly learned in the 'bosom of the fellowship,' in their church assemblies. After an examination—not on the basis of a scholarly program, but on the basis of the Word of God and the needs of the congregation—these persons are ordained or confirmed in a solemn religious ceremony according to apostolic tradition through the laying on of hands.

"The church ministers (Article 1105) are: 1) the (church) elders, who are authorized to exercise all functions of the ministry: preaching, the

administration of the sacraments of holy baptism and holy communion, the ordination through the laying on of hands and other ecclesiastical duties. 2) The (actually so-called) spiritual teachers or 'preachers,' who also have the right (or the duty, respectively) to preach, to solemnize marriages, to officiate at burials, to keep the church records, etc. With regard to the administration of the sacraments, however, they only function in cases of special need as the representatives of the elders. 3) The deacons or ministers, in the worship services and in other church affairs; they are especially responsible for the administration of church property and the care for the poor. All these leaders are confirmed by the elders through the laying on of hands.

"With reference to the degree of educational preparation of our church leaders, the majority acquire their religious knowledge within the church fellowship, as already stated, others in theological schools of various levels in a foreign country. Especially many individuals are chosen from the ranks of gifted and God-fearing teachers (all[11] these teachers also serve as teachers of religion). The lack of a definite educational standard for our ministers does not adversely affect our church life, since every congregation does not only have one, but several leaders, and their ministry is a collective one. 'Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord . . . . To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom,' etc. (I Cor. 12). For the supervision of the religious and moral training of youth, for instance, the leaders (church council) of the congregations or groups choose from their own midst experienced (and trained) pedagogues. This is also practiced in matters which require theological training. Also for the representation of the churches and other congregational needs the same leaders (church council) elect the most qualified members from their own midst—with the consent of the church congregation.

"The collegial assemblies of the spiritual leaders of our brotherhood have been designated for many years as follows: council of church leaders, conference, sessions, committees. All these 'collegia' elect their chairman from the ranks of their elders or ministers. The resolutions of such collegial deliberations become effective only after they have been reviewed and accepted by the church assemblies (brotherhood-meetings). To the brotherhood, all those belong who are of age and are baptized. The elder or his representative chairs such meetings.

"With regard to the support of our ministers it can be said that there are always many such spiritual workers found among us who, because they are financially independent, refuse any remuneration. This group constitutes the majority. Others receive according to need either a full or

partial remuneration—by way of a salary or in some other way. Although we use the modest terminology of our fathers and hence do not speak of a 'hierarchy' or 'clergy,' but employ the designation 'spiritual leadership' or 'spiritual ministry,' we are nevertheless convinced that we have within our church or brotherhood all the spiritual ministers or 'stewards of the mysteries of God' (I Cor. 4:1) as they were common in the church after the death of the holy apostles.

"These 'ecclesiastical regulations, customs, and rules of our confession' we are resolved to observe, without deviation, also in the future without interference by worldly authorities in our spiritual affairs. To this end may God help us!

"C. *Concerning Freedom of Conscience*

"According to our understanding, freedom of conscience in the true sense of the word consists in allowing everyone the opportunity to practice his religion according to his own mature conviction. We are of the belief that no compulsory measure or force can satisfy or stifle the spiritual needs of a human soul thirsting for peace of mind. The Most High Manifestoes of April 17 and October 17, 1905, gives us a legitimate hope for such freedom of conscience.

"D. *Concerning Propaganda and the Unity of the Church*

"In the legislative proposal of the Minister of the Interior Sub No. 1474, it is stated on page 14: 'that every religious communion has the natural tendency to enlarge itself and expand. Since every religious communion considers itself as the bearer of the sole and absolute truth, and all other religious teachings as false, it will consider it as its moral obligation to proclaim the truth, which it confesses.'

"Although we Mennonites [12] confess our religion with the full conviction of its truth, since we base it on the Gospel and the teaching of the holy apostles, we nevertheless recognize that there are truths of the Christian faith to be found in all Christian denominations. We confess with them the grace unto salvation, insofar as they confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that the repentant sinner is cleansed of his sins by the blood of Christ, and given the power of a renewed life. In I John 4:2-3 we read: 'Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God.' And the Savior Himself says in the Gospel of Luke 9:50: 'Do not forbid him; for he that is not against you is for you.' The faith in Christ, active in love, is the most important and essential aspect. The external forms which are practiced by various Christian denominations are, in our view, less significant.

"The Mennonites see the 'only holy, universal Christian church, the

communion of saints'[13] in the Christian people of all groups, churches, denominations and communions of Christendom—who, as stated above, preserve the faith in Christ, the Redeemer. The fullness of truth is in the common possession of all—with differing degrees of their[14] personal perfection or imperfection. Every true and sincere believer, however, will cling to the confession and to those practices which are most fully in keeping with his own religious convictions and feelings. He will in no aspect, for nothing and for nobody, deviate from his understanding of the truth, but assert with the Apostle Paul: 'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you . . . . It is the Lord who judges me' (I Cor. 4:3, 4). Knowing that 'we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ' (II Cor. 5:10).

"In this way we Mennonites[15] look upon our communion or church, and upon others. We know that 'we all make many mistakes' (James 3:2) and that our knowledged is imperfect. . . . 'But the greatest of these is love' (I Cor. 13:9-13). And in Christ Jesus nothing is of any avail 'but faith working through love' (Gal. 5:6). We are waiting for the time when, after the example of the Apostolic Church (Acts 15:6, 23, 31), the apostles, i.e. (now) their representatives, and the brethren from all sections of the Church of Christ will gather and unite for such a resolution which will not impose on any believer an unnecessary 'burden,' and of which it will be possible to say in truth: 'For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.' Then will be fulfilled the sacred legacy of our glorified Head: 'that they may all be one' (John 17:21).

"Therefore, any propaganda among Christians of other denominations (in the sense of the projected legislation of the Minister of the Interior) is far from our[16] minds. Only, when someone of another faith, out of his own mature conviction, desires to join our fellowship, we can for consience's sake not deny his admission. Our responsibility in a more comprehensive fulfillment of Christ's command: 'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation' (Mark 16:15) we see primarily in the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures among all peoples through donating voluntary contributions to the Bible societies: to the Evangelical, as well as to the Russian. In general, in giving any possible support to evangelical work there, where we are invited. Missionary activity as propaganda, in the strict sense of the word, we carry on only among non-Christian peoples."

§295 C. *Translation from the Russian:*

"Subjects for Deliberation of the Mennonite (Business) General Conference[17] which is to convene on October 26, 27, 28, 1910, at

Schoensee, District of Berdiansk, Taurida." [18]

(These subjects for deliberation were submitted to all churches with the following accompanying letter):

"P.P.

"Herewith there is presented to you one copy of 'Requests, etc.' and one copy of the 'Most Humble Submission' which you are to present for consideration to a regular brotherhood meeting of your church, so that your delegates at the prospective conference in Schoensee on October 26, 27 and 28 can respond to these questions in the spirit of the congregation. As an explanatory comment to 'Requests, etc.' we add that the Mennonites in the projected legislation concerning religious bodies and communions are counted among 'those churches not recognized by law,' although the legislation grants the free exercise of their religion. We cannot be identified with the 'not recognized churches,' the free exercise of religion mentioned there has been our right until now, and is indispensable for the future—hence our comment: 'cannot apply to Mennonites in a negative sense, etc.' Paragraphs 6-12 deal with the establishment of a new congregation, especially important for us in our young settlements. A form of a 'Certification of the Mother Church' will in all probability be presented to the Conference. All comments of the congregation are to be made on the white margin. With greetings, H. Unruh, H. Braun."

I.

"The wishes of the Mennonite churches[19] in Russia with reference to several points in the 'Short Explanatory Notes' relative to 'the projected legislation concerning Religious Church Bodies and Religious Communions.'

"To Article 2, I, of the Project and the annotation to this article. The application of Article 2 cannot be employed against the Mennonites in a negative sense since their doctrine is recognized by law: the gracious most high statute, Tsar Paul I, of September 6, 1800 (copy enclosed), and the Articles 1104 and 1105 of the regulations concerning the 'Ecclesiastical Affairs of Foreign Denominations.' It would seem strange, if the Mennonite doctrine of faith would be described as not being recognized by imperial laws, when seven all-Russian monarchs, beginning with Tsarina Catherine II and up to the present, until the current blessed reign of the lord and Tsar, Nicholas II, have recognized it. We plead, therefore, to grant unto us the right to practice the church regulations, customs and rules of our Confession of Faith also in the future without any interference by worldly authorities in the spiritual affairs of our congregations.

"To 6-12. The presently-existing Mennonite 'Church-Congregations' [20] are sufficiently known and recognized (see discussion above). New congregations to be established give notice of the fact of their organization to the respective provincial authorities for registration. Such notification is to be accompanied by: 1) a certification of their mother church, 2) a printed copy of the [21] Mennonite catechism in Russian translation, and 3) the documents [22] which pertain to the confessional questions of the Mennonites (1910 edition).

"Our spiritual workers: church-elders and preachers ('spiritual teachers'—Article 1105)—are not called in a superficial manner. They are elected by the respective church-parishes (congregations, brotherhood-meetings) at a solemn prayer-worship service in their houses of assembly. They are chosen from the ranks of persons who have proven their Christian character in word and deed, and who possess the necessary knowledge of Christian doctrine, as well as the ability to instruct. They acquire the specific knowledge in schools of various kinds, from the lowest to the highest. The doctrines of the faith, however, are primarily acquired 'in the bosom of the church,' i.e., in their worship assemblies.

"For this purpose, so-called 'Bible-discussion meetings' are conducted in their churches from time to time, lasting from two to four days, in addition to their regular worship services. These are conducted by the local church elder or minister in cooperation with the respective church, at which every participant has the right to ask questions or give answers. The right to participate in these Bible-discussions is granted to everyone who desires it—although within the framework of the Mennonite church-order, and after due consideration by and under the responsibility of the leader.

"In addition to this, there are periodic 'Biblical Review and Deeper Life Courses' for ministers (spiritual teachers, Article 1105) and ministerial candidates conducted within the framework of Mennonite doctrine and church-order.

"The supervision and responsibility for these courses are assigned to the local church elder or minister. The special administration of these courses—if necessary—is assigned by him to a qualified person—with the consent of the local congregation (where the courses are held) and its other spiritual teachers (ministers).

"After an examination, not on the basis of a scholarly program, but on the basis of the Word of God and the needs of the fellowship, the elected 'spiritual persons' are ordained to the ministry at a solemn religious ceremony, according to the practice of the apostles, through the act of the laying on of hands, or solemn certification.

"Our 'spiritual teachers' are (Article 1105): 1) the elders (presbyters, senior ministers) who have all the rights for the spiritual ministry: preaching, the administration of the holy sacraments of holy baptism and holy communion, the laying on of hands and other religious functions; 2) the spiritual teachers or 'preachers,' who also have the right and duty to preach, to officiate at marriages and burials, to keep church records, etc. In such matters as the administration of the holy sacraments, or leadership, etc., the ministers, if necessary, act as representatives of the elders; and 3) the 'deacons' or ministers at matters of church-stewardship and public welfare.

"To the articles 14 and 18.

1. Persons who through the holy ordinances have been accepted as prescribed by the Mennonite evangelical doctrine of faith are considered to be church members.

2. Children of church members who have been entered into the birth register of the congregation are considered as 'adherents of the church' (standing under spiritual watch-care and instruction-catechumens) and receive full membership only through admission in the prescribed order as given in point one.

3. Membership is lost: a) through a declaration of voluntary withdrawal from the congregation; b) through excommunication on the basis of church discipline, until such time as the one rebuked will mend his ways.

4. The age-level at which members are given the right to participate in the brotherly deliberations of an ecclesiastical-spiritual or ecclesiastical administrative nature, every congregation determines according to its regulations and custom.

5. As representatives of the church before the authorities or in other affairs of the church, members are elected who are not under twenty-five years of age.

"To the articles 15, 16, 17.

"The brotherhood meetings pertaining to all church-administrative questions are called, whenever necessary, by the elder or his representative, according to the present traditional Mennonite practice. These deliberative assemblies, called according to the established order, are legal, regardless of the number of participants. All questions are decided by a definite majority of members present.

"To article 3. Concerning religious communions. The Mennonites would prefer to substitute the designation 'fellowship' for 'society' since the former is more in keeping with the congregational and spiritual linguistic pattern of the existing translations of the Holy Scriptures.

[Here it should be mentioned that, upon the investigations of several conference-members of the Conference in Schoensee, the 'Children's Worship Services'[23] have also been incorporated into the list of 'wishes.']

II

"Concerning Church-Registers" (Project)

"To His High Excellency, the Minister of the Interior, through the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs.

"From the General Conference of Mennonite Churches in Russia, October, 1910, at Schoensee, District of Berdiansk, Province of Taurida.

"Most Humble Submission

"In March of this year the authorized representatives of our churches—the Church-Elder Abraham Goerz and the Ministers Heinrich Braun and David Epp—presented themselves to the director of the department for Ecclesiastical Affairs of foreign denominations in matters related to church-registers in Mennonite congregations. Two copies of our church-registers were presented to the Director at that time. It became evident that, although our church-registry[24] had been kept according to the spirit of the law, it was not founded upon any legislative statute. Upon the request of our deputies for good counsel, the Director gave proposals concerning the manner of revision of the present books, and the keeping of these books in the future.

"Consequently, we have the honor to obediently petition your High Excellency:

I. Every Mennonite church (church-parish) elects a Revision-Commission, composed of: a) one church-elder or minister, b) one member, who is employed in an administrative office, and who is known to the authorities and enjoys their confidence (colony-administrator, district judge and others), and c) one ordinary member. The person who keeps the church-register of a given church-parish belongs to the staff of the Commission as reporter and consultant. Every Commission will be presented to the provincial authorities for confirmation. Copies of the civil-registers (church-registers) are herewith enclosed.

II. The keeping of church books (registers) shall in future be assigned either to a church-bookkeeper, especially elected for this purpose by the church (church-parish) from among its members, or to an ecclesiastical minister of the church. This church-bookkeeper will be presented to the provincial authorities for confirmation, and is responsible for his business-administration before the law on a general basis.

"The birth, marriage, and death registers (lists) will be kept in two copies, and presented to the provincial authorities at the end of the year for approval. One copy will be returned to the church.

"Every congregation annually elects a commission composed of three members for a preliminary examination of the books prior to their being forwarded to the provincial authorities. This commission will be presented to the provincial authorities for confirmation.

"The book, as well as the church-seal, approved by the respective authority, shall be kept in a safe place under the responsibility of the church-bookkeeper. The certificates of registration issued represent exact copies of the civil statute.

III

"School Affairs of the Mennonites

"A. The Supervision of the Mennonite clergy ('Spiritual teachers,' Article 1104-1105, Part 1, Vol. 2) concerning the religious-moral training of youth. The Colonial Statute (Part 1, Vol. 12, #5) already stated that the Lutheran pastors, Catholic fathers, and 'the spiritual teachers' of the Mennonites are to exercise a 'careful supervision with regard to the religious-moral training of youth, both in and out of school.' Such rights and duties are reinforced by a Most High decree of May 2, 1881, and are in agreement with Article 440, Part 1, Vol. 11, edition of 1896, where it is stated: 'The ministers shall conscientiously visit the village schools, and shall supervise the religious training of youth in the schools, as well as in their church parishes.' The law makes this supervision obligatory for all 'spiritual teachers' in active ministry. As a result of the peculiar Mennonite church order, the training of ministers varies greatly. For this reason, the spiritual teachers of all Mennonites impose upon themselves restrictions in this regard—with the consent of their congregations—in that they elect from their midst those colleagues for school supervision who are regarded as the most competent, spiritually and pedagogically (mostly former pedagogues). Every such election is brought to the attention of the local school board.

"B. The Employment of Teachers of the Schools Supported by the Mennonites. In a circular of September 13, 1891 (under Number 15884), the Administrator of the Ministry for Public Education, Bythshkov, prescribes, in the form of a temporary rule, 'that the teachers of these schools are chosen by the school inspector, and upon his recommendation to the Director of Public Schools they are to be certified for service, dismissed from the same, or to be transferred to another school.' On the basis of this regulation, misunderstandings have occurred and are occurring at present in many congregations, who support their own

schools, and their local school board. In agreement with the explanation of the directing senate in its decision of June 15, 1883, under Number 4807, (and of October 8, 1903), the jurisdiction with regard to the selection of candidates for teaching positions belongs to the owners of the school. Therefore we petition, since all our congregations are the founders, owners, and supporters of the schools, again to restore the regulation as it existed prior to the mentioned temporary arrangement with regard to the employment of teachers in our municipalities, villages, estates, etc., according to which the school assembly or society has the right to select teacher-candidates and to present them for certification.

"C. Worship Services in School Buildings. Ever since the Mennonites have lived in Russia, they have conducted their worship services not only in their churches, but also in school buildings. In the villages these are built and supported exclusively at the expense of the village communities. (On the landed estates at the expense of the landowners or renters.) During school-time, they are used for the purpose of instruction, and at other times—according to need—they serve as places of congregational worship, as has also been the practice of Catholic and other Protestant colonists.

"At the present time, the conducting of worship services in school buildings is prohibited by the police in many places.[25] Through such prohibition the respective congregations are brought into a difficult situation, since many of their members reside at some distance from buildings of worship (in places from four to ten versts and more).

"We, therefore, request that we may also have the right, in the future, to use our school buildings (during the time not used for instruction) for purposes of worship.

§296 "The Imperial Charter of Privileges

"We, through God's enabling grace,
"Paul the First,

"Emperor and Autocrat of all Russia: of Moscow, Kiev, Vladimir, Novgorod, Tsar of Kazan, Tsar of Astrakhan, Tsar of Siberia, Tsar of Kherson—Taurida, Sovereign of Pskov and Grand Prince of Smolensk, Lithuania, Volynia and Podolia, Prince of Estonia, Livland, Kurland, and Semigal, Samogit, Korelsk, Tver, Yugorsk, Perm, Vyatka, Bolgar, etc.; Sovereign and Grand Prince of Nov-Gorod, Nizov lands, Chernigov, Riazan, Polotsk, Rostov, Yaroslav, Beloozero, Udorsk, Obdorsk, Kondiisk, Vitepsk, Mstislavsk, Ruler and Sovereign of Iversk lands, Kartalin and Georgian Tsars, and Kabardin lands, Cherkas and Mountain Princes, and others, Crown Prince and Owner; Heir of Norway, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, Sotrman, Dithmarschen and

Oldenburg, Sovereign of Ever and Grand Master of the Imperial Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

"In order to authenticate our most gracious grant in response to the petition received by us from the Mennonites settled in the New Russian provinces, who, according to the testimony of their supervisors and because of their outstanding industry and their commendable way of life, can serve as an example to the others settled there, and who, because of this, have become deserving of our special attention, we have, in this charter of privileges granted to them, not only affirmed all of the rights and privileges previously agreed to, but have also, in order to encourage their thrift and concern for agriculture still more, graciously granted them additional rights in the following articles.

"First: we reaffirm to them and their descendants the religious freedoms promised earlier, by virtue of which they are entitled to follow their faith and church practices unhindered. We also graciously grant, that if occasion should require them to testify in a court of law, their oral affirmation shall be considered legal in lieu of an oath.

"Second: We affirm to each family as their indisputable and perpetually hereditary property, the sixty-five dessiatines of useful land, bearing in mind, however, that not the smallest plot under any circumstances may be transferred into strange hands, neither be sold nor any deeds of purchase be processed without proper sanction of their authorities.

"Third: We most graciously permit all Mennonites presently settled in Russia, as well as those who will arrive in the future, to set up factories and other handicrafts necessary for them, to establish guilds and shops in their villages as well as in cities of our Empire, and to allow them the sale of their products without hindrance in accordance with respective State laws.

"Fourth: We permit Mennonites, according to the rights of ownership, to make full use of all lands, fishing, brewing of beer and vinegar, distillation of wine for their own use, as well as for sale within areas designated to them.

"Fifth: We forbid outsiders to build inns and pubs, as well as such merchants to sell wine and maintain taverns on the lands belonging to the Mennonites, without their consent.

"Sixth: We affirm by Our Imperial word that none of the Mennonites presently settled or those who will settle in the future, their children, or their descendants, at no time whatever will be drafted and enlisted into military or civil service without their personal desire.

"Seventh: We free all their villages and houses from any kind of

billeting and lodging, with the exception of those times when detachments are on the move, billeting regulations should be observed. In the same manner We free them from every kind of public works, on the condition, however, that bridges, ferries and roads located on their lands be kept in proper order and that, in accordance with general regulations, they participate in the maintenance of mail service.

"Eight: We most graciously grant to all Mennonites and their descendants full freedom and authority to use and dispose of their own possessions according to the discrete and best intentions of each individual, excepting, however, the land granted to them by the government. But if some, having paid all debts listed against them, desire to leave Russia with all their belongings, they are liable to pay a three-year tax on the capital gained in Russia, the amount to be set by their own consciences and by that of the village authorities. The same principle is bound to be applied to property of the deceased whose relatives and descendants reside in other countries when the property will have to be transferred to them according to hereditary rights established among them. In such case, they may, at the discretion of villages, elect trustees according to their rules over the estate of underaged children remaining after death.

"Ninth: We affirm to them the ten-year privilege of tax exemption granted earlier, extending it also to those who in future will settle in the Province of Novorossisk; but since according to a survey, settlers are at present in a difficult situation due to several years of poor crops and loss of cattle; and, in addition to that, in the Chortitza area some families are expected to resettle on other lands for reasons of overpopulation, therefore, considering their poverty and lack of means of subsistence, and having earlier graciously granted to those who remain at the places of present settlements, a ten-year privilege, we extend the privilege for five more years; and for those who will resettle, for ten years, but decree that after the lapse of this time they pay fifteen kopeks per dessiatine annually from the sixty-five dessiatines of land granted to each family; freeing them, however, from all other taxes of another kind. But loans, advanced to them, will have to be repaid in equal parts after the expiration of the aforesaid privilege by those remaining after ten years; by those who will be resettled, after twenty years.

"Tenth: In the conclusion of this Our Imperial Charter, granting Most Graciously the rights and advantages to Mennonites, We instruct all Our military and civil administrators, as well as the local authorities of the said Mennonites and their descendants not only to leave them in the peaceful possession of their settlements, lands and conveniences belonging to them and not to hinder them in the implementation of all

privileges granted by Us, and also to render to them in all instances every help, defence and protection.

"Granted in the city of Gachin in the year one thousand eight hundred, on the sixth day of September, the fourth year of Our reign, and the second of our being Grand Master.

Paul
Prince Rostoptschin.

"Sealed in the College of Foreign Affairs on the tenth day of September, eighteen hundred."

"That this copy is authentic in all respects with the original is certified by the Chortitza Volost Office, Ekaterinoslav District and Province by signatures and affixing of the seal. August 24, 1910. No. 5690.
For the Volost Elder: Wallmann. (Seal.)
Volost Secretary: Jakob Klassen."

3. The General Mennonite Conference on October 26 and 27, 1910,[26] and its Consequences. §297

a) This conference accepted the proposal—given under #295 (see "Wishes," etc.)—with minor corrections (as given in the following minutes under #299). The way in which this conference was composed, the official approval of the composition, and the way in which it carried out its business, was of great significance and had major consequences. Earlier already (and that for many years) "brother-elders" had occasionally and by private initiative been invited, by influential "church-elders", especially by those of the Molotschna who were tolerant towards the Brethren. Of those invited, possibly one or more ministers would come. As a rule, these would not fail to reveal a reserved, anxiously suspicious disposition. One preferred to think of himself as a martyr and as a member of the special "Church of God" in the framework of the church-register of the M.B. Church. Here, however, one was in the assembly of the representatives of the "completely" secularized "church" (of unbelievers—or were there believers among them?!). This artificially pious and reserved attitude was one of the most repulsive aspects of the M.B. Church until recent times. If, for instance, a Mennonite minister, feeling in his heart that he was a brother of these "Brethren", would come to them, it could happen in spite of everything (after brief whispering, questioning glances, and shrugging of shoulders among the leadership), that the guest was quietly and cordially left in the pews, and was not called upon to preach! Some of the brethren of the Mennonite Church have displayed an admirable meekness and humility. (We talk about that which we—as members of the

M.B. Church have witnessed with boiling blood and burning brain. This sin of the M.B. Church, too, must be named in a truthful history. We have granted the M.B. Church the great right, in its origination and continuation, of being a Mennonite communion and have established this thoroughly on the basis of the documents. Not only have we presented the great triumphs over its ecclesio-political opponents, but also—and this is even more important—we have incontrovertibly documented its triumphs over the ailments of its childhood days. For this reason we have of necessity devoted a vast space to it in our book, and also generously shown our love and appreciation. But we love and appreciate our brethren in the older Mennonite congregations just as much; [especially the determined believers and honest seekers after God] and every injustice which is perpetrated by the "brethren" against them arouses our indignation as much as that which they experience from the Mennonites. But— to the concerns of today.) To the "General Conferences," as well as to the meetings of the local conventions, the "brethren" had to be invited and had to come, as a consequence of their inviolable legal status as Mennonites, their common enjoyment and obligatory or voluntary participation in the achievements and sacrifices in the forestry service, in schools, and in matters of public welfare. Gradually the representatives of the M.B. congregations, especially the younger generation, learned to conduct themselves in a more objective and brotherly fashion. The invitations and participations mentioned were, as already emphasized, occasional and irregular. The consultative body, formerly designated as the General Conference (Bundes-Konferenz), was re-named several years ago as "the General Conference of the Mennonite Ministry in Russia." At one of the former sessions,[27] the question was raised by one of the conference participants whether the title "General Conference" was justified, since the large M.B. Church was not represented (in a regular manner, often not at all), and it was decided to extend a regular invitation. Thus, numerous representatives of the M.B. congregations came to the recently concluded General Mennonite Conference (of 1910). Approximately one-third of all participants were "brethren," the honorable conference chairman informs us. The leadership of the M.B. congregations was well represented from the Rueckenau-Molotschna, Einlage (District of Chortitza), Kuban, Ignatievo, Zagradovka, Memrik congregations, etc., etc. The representatives were formally authorized by resolutions of the congregations which were presented to the Ministry of the Interior (with the request and approval of the conference) through the commissioned representative of the entire Mennonite fraternity. Thus at a regularly-convened and prepared "General Mennonite Conference" (officially authorized) the regular, authorized representatives (recognized by church and state) of



a) Retired Elder, Bernhard Peters (b. 1817), Elder of the Mennonite Church, Margenau, Molotschna, 1861-1887.



b) Retired missionary, Heinrich Dirks, Elder of the Gnadenfeld Mennonite Church.



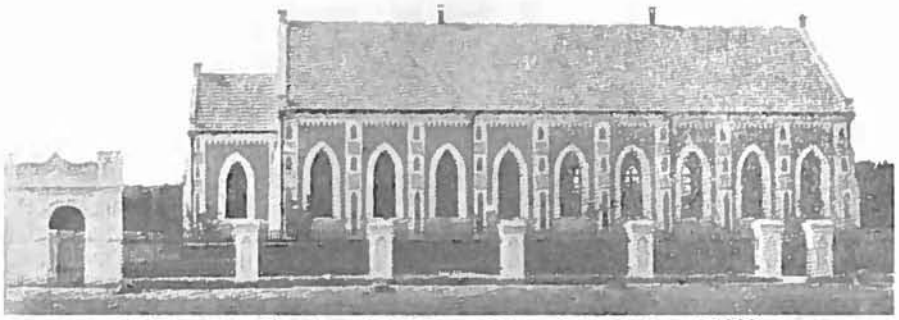
c) Isaak Dyck, Elder of the Chortitza Mennonite Church since 1896.



d) Heinrich Unruh, Elder of the Halbstadt Mennonite Church since 1896.



e) Johann Klassen, Elder of the Kronsweide Mennonite Church since 1907.



f) Mennonite Church at Schoensee, Molotschna (dedicated 1909).

both groups deliberated together: the larger, older Mennonite congregations and the smaller, newer ones.[28] They acknowledged the same common "wishes" (#295 above) with regard to their church order, the same basic views concerning the "One Church of Christ," concerning "Propaganda," and the "Explanations" related thereto (see *#292* and *#293* above). They did this by reading and accepting the decisions of Schoenwiese, and by authorizing the three representatives (appointed in Schoenwiese), namely Goerz, Epp and Braun, anew with full powers here in Schoensee, thus sanctioning their finished transactions. Together they discussed and decided various other matters. Thereby both groups have finally, in the fifty-first year of the existence of the M.B. Church—in a solemn and formal way—each recognized the other as a "Christian Mennonite Church" on one and the same basic confession, especially in the form of the general Mennonite catechism (see "Wishes," 1, and 6-12 above) and one and the same governmental legal status. This transpired openly before the authorities and the entire Russian Mennonite brotherhood. More than that, according to the testimony of three prominent "brethren," even the conservative representatives of the M.B. Church have felt at ease, and have found "believers" and brothers in Christ among the officiating Mennonite leaders (elders and ministers). They gathered this from their words and from their exchange with them! In the joint sessions (up to point six of the inclusive deliberation: see minutes below), no quarrel or difference of opinion between the two main groups (Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren) came to the fore. On one lively-debated issue (dramatic presentations—point five of the minutes), the representatives of both groups (whether present or absent—the latter as partly under indirect attack) were found on either side of the question. That was the form and the spirit of the "General Mennonite Conference" of 1910, and its consequence is obvious. And all this happened in spite of those things which need to be narrated regarding the previously transpired events which threatened the unity of both church groups.[29] During the current year, a group of members of the M.B. Church was accused of unlawful, propagandistic actions. A prominent provincial official authorized to make arrests and take other measures, carried on investigations. However, in spite of the most thorough and most comprehensive treatment of the matter, he declared such actions to be inopportune and did not carry them out. Yet this gentleman declared, that a certain group of "Mennonite Brethren" were not Mennonites, but Baptists (which was not substantiated, however, by higher authorities). At this point, a concern emerged among some good but anxious members, among a few evil-minded ones out of envy and malicious joy, among others, and including some leaders of the Mennonite congregations, because of a basic conviction and in honest opposition as well as

among several over-zealous "brethren." Among them certain excitement and contention surfaced, as well as in the Mennonite press. Much that was embarrassing was unnecessarily said; we would gladly consign this to the forgetfullness of society, and to the gathering dust on the yellowing pages of the newspapers. Anyone interested to discover the truth, objectively and calmly, for himself, should read statutes in part "D" of our book, beginning with *#70* (which arouse our antipathy, and are so numerous as to be nauseating, but which are necessary for objectivity). Another symptom causing anxiety during the last summer was the sudden prohibition of "solemn baptisms under an open sky" disclosed to the representative of the Rueckenau M.B. Church, H.J. Braun, and to the elder of the "Molotschna Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood," Heinrich Guenther. As a result of a personal and written petition of the two leaders mentioned above addressed to the governor of Taurida, and the latter's cordial and immediate presentation, the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior completely rescinded the matter and informed the two brethren (Braun and Guenther) via telegram that they were released from their restriction, and that "the baptism of Mennonites under an open sky" was permitted on the former basis. [30] These and other things created a somewhat tense atmosphere and apprehensions for the "General Conference." Praise God—it all transpired publicly and officially, in complete quiet and peace, in the best way as already described. Obviously, there were undercurrents, but also a wholesome counter-pressure in both camps. An educated "Old Colony" minister[31] writes to the author: "We in the Old Colony are somewhat slow, hence we are not excited too quickly. Here, too, people have read with interest [in the papers] about the outbursts on both sides, but have reduced them to the proper measure of personal irritability, and therewith prevented a too strong generalization . . . . And we . . . men of the Old Colony . . . would have, I believe (in the event that it had come to a head), tried to subdue it. We did not seriously believe in this danger, since we believed that we had matters in hand, i.e., to be able to ward off any offence." And—praise God! "It was peaceful and beautiful at the Conference," an influential "brother" wired us. God will bless the "peacemakers!"

§298 b) And thus we, as "United Old-Evangelical, a so-called Mennonite Brotherhood" (see #294, "Explanations," A, paragraph 4) have come before the highest government, as well as (indirectly) before the legislative body of our fatherland, and, finally, before His Imperial Majesty. This has been realized in that the Schoensee Conference has sanctioned all steps taken by the authorized representatives, and all resolutions of the various deliberative bodies (laid down in the above

The Commission for Matters of Faith reappointed by the General Mennonite Conference at Schoensee in October, 1910.



a) Abram Goerz, Elder of the Mennonite Church, Ohrloff-Neukirch.



b) H. J. Braun, Authorized minister of the M.B. Church Rueckenau.



c) D. H. Epp, Minister of the Chortitza Mennonite Church in Ekaterinoslav.

statutes) and submitted them as directives to the three newly-elected plenipotentiaries (Goerz, Braun and Epp). (*De jure* any single congregation, brotherhood-meeting or session could renounce the resolutions of the Conference, and would then be left to its own fate.)

Among the approximately 16,000 Mennonite families, there are probably not more than 1,000 who are not deeply rooted in the soil of Russia, and for 121 years we all know "no king but the emperor" of Russia. When the North American colonies had declared and consolidated themselves as "The United States of North America," and the Mennonites were better off under the new state-structure than before, a number of Mennonite families could not come to rest in their heart and conscience. A small group went in search of "a country in which the king of England was honored" and a massive emigration to Canada took place where the king of England was honored.[32] When Prince Galizyn visited the Russian Mennonites in Manitoba, Canada, around 1890, they asked him officially in their churches (in a naive and moving manner) "to say to the Tsar of Russia" that they were enjoying their life very much under Queen Victoria, but that their heart had not at all forgotten the love and gratitude toward Russia and its imperial family. Only for conscience' sake (so they understood it—not we who remained in Russia) had they been compelled to leave the land so unforgettable for them; but they would never forget their love and gratitude toward the tsar and the country. We present-day Mennonites of Russia "would like to remain only in that country where the Russian tsar is honored!" If His Imperial Majesty considers it timely and willed by God to present all laws for consideration to "the best people of the country," we rejoice in that; but we also rejoice in the fact that every legislative project accepted by the legislative bodies will remain a document without consequence unless it has the sanction of the crown. What the center of the Duma has desired and discussed in matters of faith and education until now is quite sufficient for us Mennonites. If the respective authority during the present embarrassment (with regard to "baptism under an open sky") of one group of Mennonites (not even the largest) immediately looked into the matter and solved the difficulty, we confidently believe that the proper imperial agencies, as eyes and ears of His Majesty, will take note and consider the great concern of all the Mennonites of Russia in a just manner. As long as we are in Russia, we fear, in the final analysis, only God and the tsar, and likewise we only trust in God and the tsar. And we confidently hope that our supplications, as in 1874, will not only come to the ear of God, but also to the ear of the tsar. We also believe that as subjects, citizens and Christians we will not only be able to live in Russia with an untroubled conscience, but that we will also be able to stand as a patriotic,

culturally-useful, small member in the large family of Russia (into which we have been adopted by Divine Providence), and will learn to do this more and more as a total body.[33] If individuals among us at times should act contrary to the general interest and to the law, then we as a fellowship of believers confess: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities."

We conclude this chapter with the minutes of the Schoensee Conference, and will then proceed to the question of how we "preach the gospel to the whole creation" outside "Christian denominations"—our foreign missions.

§299 c) Minutes of the Deliberations of the General Mennonite Conference at Schoensee on October 26, 27, 1910:

First Day (October 26)

Forenoon: After a brief, hearty word of welcome to all those present by the elder of the Schoensee congregation, Mr. Heinrich Peters, Elder Abraham Goerz, Ohrloff, gave the conference message based on I Peter 2:13-17.

Represented were fifty-two congregations with 173 delegates.

Afternoon: The leadership for the deliberations was assumed by Elder Heinrich Unruh, Muntau. To serve as second secretary (Minister Gerhard Harder serves as first) teacher Kornelius Abraham Wiens, Neu-Halbstadt, is elected.

The secretary G. Harder first reads the minutes of the General Conference of October 14 and 15, 1909, at Schoenfeld, and then the minutes of the meeting of representatives of the joint church councils of the Mennonite congregations of the Ekaterinoslav, Taurida and Kherson provinces of June 17 and 18, 1910, in Schoenwiese. Then the conference proceeded to the discussion of the points on this year's agenda.

1. First Point for Deliberation: A review of a "Most Humble Submision"[34] to the Minister of the Interior concerning our church registration records. The aforementioned submission was accepted by the assembly with the following changes or additions:

a) Section 2, page 3, the German translation shall not read "Mennonite church congregations," but "Mennonite congregations."

Note re: Section 2, page 3, point 1: "A certification of their congregation." A commission composed of the men: Abraham Goerz, David Epp, Heinrich Dirks, Wilhelm Neufeld, and Peter Penner is given the assignment to prepare a form of certification, which is to be issued by mother-congregations when new congregations are established.

b) Point 2, page 5, is to be formulated thus: "Our spiritual workers: church-elders and ministers ('spiritual teachers'—Article 1105) are from the respective church parishes," etc.

c) Point 2, page 5, should read: "children of church members, who have been entered into the birth-register of the congregations, are considered as 'adherents of the church.' They stand under spiritual nurture and instruction (catechumen—children's worship service) and attain to full membership rights only through admission according to the established order as laid down in point one."

d) To point 3A, page 11,[35] is to be added: "To these individuals is also assigned the supervision of the instruction in German, since the German language, as the mother-tongue of Mennonite students, constitutes an essential aid in imparting of religious instruction."

Second Day (October 27)

Forenoon: Opening with song and prayer by the chairman, Mr. Heinrich Unruh, Muntau.

The form of certification for joining a prospective new congregation, prepared by the Commission, is approved by the assembly and added to the documents [see end of these minutes].

The presentation of the "Most Humble Submission" as accepted in its changed form on the second day of the conference and also the undertaking of all steps connected therewith, are assigned to a commission composed of the following members: Elder Abraham Goerz, Ohrloff, Minister David Epp, Ekaterinoslav, and Minister Heinrich Braun, Neu-Halbstadt.

The body of delegates in matters of forestry camps shall be asked to assume the costs connected therewith.

2. Second Point for Deliberation: The Mental Hospital "Bethania." Mr. Jakob Sudermann, Apanlee, presents a report about the development of the work in matters related to the institution "Bethania" during the course of the last conference year:

a) Concerning the establishment of two bursaries in Bethania through Mr. Wilhelm Schroeder (Jerlitzkaia) in the name of W.M. Schroeder, and for which Mr. Schroeder has made the sum of 40,000 rubles available to the administration.

Note: The conference expresses its gratitude to Mr. Schroeder for his donation by rising.

b) Statement of income and expenditures up to October 25, 1910:

Total receipts amounted to ..... 93,510.63 rubles

Expenditures ..... 51,382.87 rubles

In the treasury to date: 42,127.76 rubles

Note: The legacy established by Mr. Schroeder is not included in this statement.

c) Concerning the appointment of a physician, of a supervisor, etc. Mr. Sudermann points out the special difficulties related to the procurement of a suitable staff. The reporter pleads to stimulate greater interest for this matter in the congregations.

Note: For the time being, no definite decision is being made with regard to the level of payment for the care of the sick. Until further arrangements can be made, expenses are to be covered by voluntary contributions.

3. Third Point for Deliberation: The "Maria Deaf and Mute School" at Tiege. Reporter Mr. Jakob Schroeder, Ohrloff. He emphasizes the undisturbed and successful nature of the work. The original capital of the institution amounts to 18,000 rubles; the reserves to 10,000 rubles. The institution still depends upon voluntary support. The assembly is challenged, therefore, to continue to remember the Deaf and Mute School.

4. Fourth Point for Deliberation: Concerning our Forestry Camps. The reporter is Mr. David Johann Classen, Felsental. The oral report of the speaker is received with gratitude by the assembly.

5. Fifth Point for Deliberation: Concerning dramatic presentations in the schools, etc. After a lengthy discussion of the subject, the assembly accepted for further deliberation the following transition formula: "With regard to literary evenings in the schools, the Conference extends the confidence to our teachers (to whom we entrust the religious-moral training of our children) that they will do that which is proper in this and in similar questions—in every specific instance. It is the wish of the Conference, however, that the school celebration on Christmas Eve should bear the character of children's worship services.

With regard to wedding parties, it is the duty of adult church members who are close to the wedding arrangements to see to it that, on such occasions, only that is presented which is proper, pure, and not in contradiction to the prospective great and holy act.

6. Sixth Point for Deliberation: The next General Conference in which representatives of all Mennonite congregations of Russia participate is to convene, God willing, in the last half of August of the coming year (1911) in Berdiansk. The participation of the representatives of the Mennonite Brethren Church is envisioned for the second day of the Conference. [36]

7. Seventh Point for Deliberation: Four congregations report through their representatives that resolutions have been passed in their congregations according to which marriages between first cousins cannot be performed any more. Several elders and ministers personally take the stand that they do not wish to officiate any more at such marriages.

8. Eighth Point for Deliberation: Concerning a church manual (book of guidelines). A manual is to be printed which shall contain the forms for the different congregational ceremonies of the three large church groups: Chortitza, Lichtenau, Margenau, etc.; Gnadenfeld, Alexanderwohl, etc.; and Kronsweide, Rudnerweide, etc. The first edition is to be printed in 500 copies.

9. Ninth Point for Deliberation: The question of a songbook. Since a new edition of our new songbook has become necessary, the Songbook Commission is being charged with its implementation. At its next meeting, the Songbook Commission is asked to discuss the manner in which this is to be done, including the number of copies.

The request of Elder Dirks, to be released from the Songbook Commission because of his physical weakness and age, was granted. As his successor and president of the Songbook Commission, Minister Abraham Klassen [37] of Ogus-Tobe was elected.

10. Tenth Point for Deliberation: The election of a new Conference chairman. As president of our General Conference for the next triennium, Elder Abraham Unrau of New York was elected.

11. Eleventh Point for Deliberation: The elders Jakob Gerbrand and Johannes Kroeker, both from Siberia, are each granted 300 rubles from the treasury for an itinerant ministry—beginning with the new year, 1911.

Note: The Conference expresses its gratitude for love and hospitality to the Schoensee congregation by rising.

12. Twelfth Point for Deliberation: The physical and congregational needs of the new settlers in Siberia. Since, as a result of a crop failure, the need there is very great and will not diminish until the next harvest, we and our congregations do not want to cease to collect love-gifts for the alleviation of the need there.

In view of the congregational needs of the young churches, the Conference expresses the wish that at least two visits be made to those areas during the next conference year by itinerant ministers from the so-called "Old Colony congregations" (Chortitza, Kronsweide, etc.) and from the Molotschna congregations. The representatives of the congregations from Davlekanovo and Omsk express the desire that they also be visited on these trips.

The Conference was closed by Elder Heinrich Dirks with a report about the status of the "foreign missions" of the Mennonites and with a worship service which he based on Eph. 2:10.

The original copy is signed by: Conference Chairman: Heinrich Unruh. Conference Secretary: G. Harder.

For the establishment of a new congregation, the following form has been prepared by the General Conference (which had convened at Schoensee on October 26 and 27) which is to be filled out by the elder or leading minister of the mother church for the authorization of those persons who wish to join the prospective new congregation. (See note, point 1, a.)

Certificate

This certifies that settler-proprietor (homestead-owner) of Province . . . . . District . . . . . Volost . . . . . Village . . . . . NNN., who desires to join the newly-established church community, is a member of . . . . . the Mennonite Church. To this I testify with my signature and the application of the church seal.

G.

FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE MENNONITES OF RUSSIA

XXXVI.

THE MISSION OF THE OLDER MENNONITE CHURCH

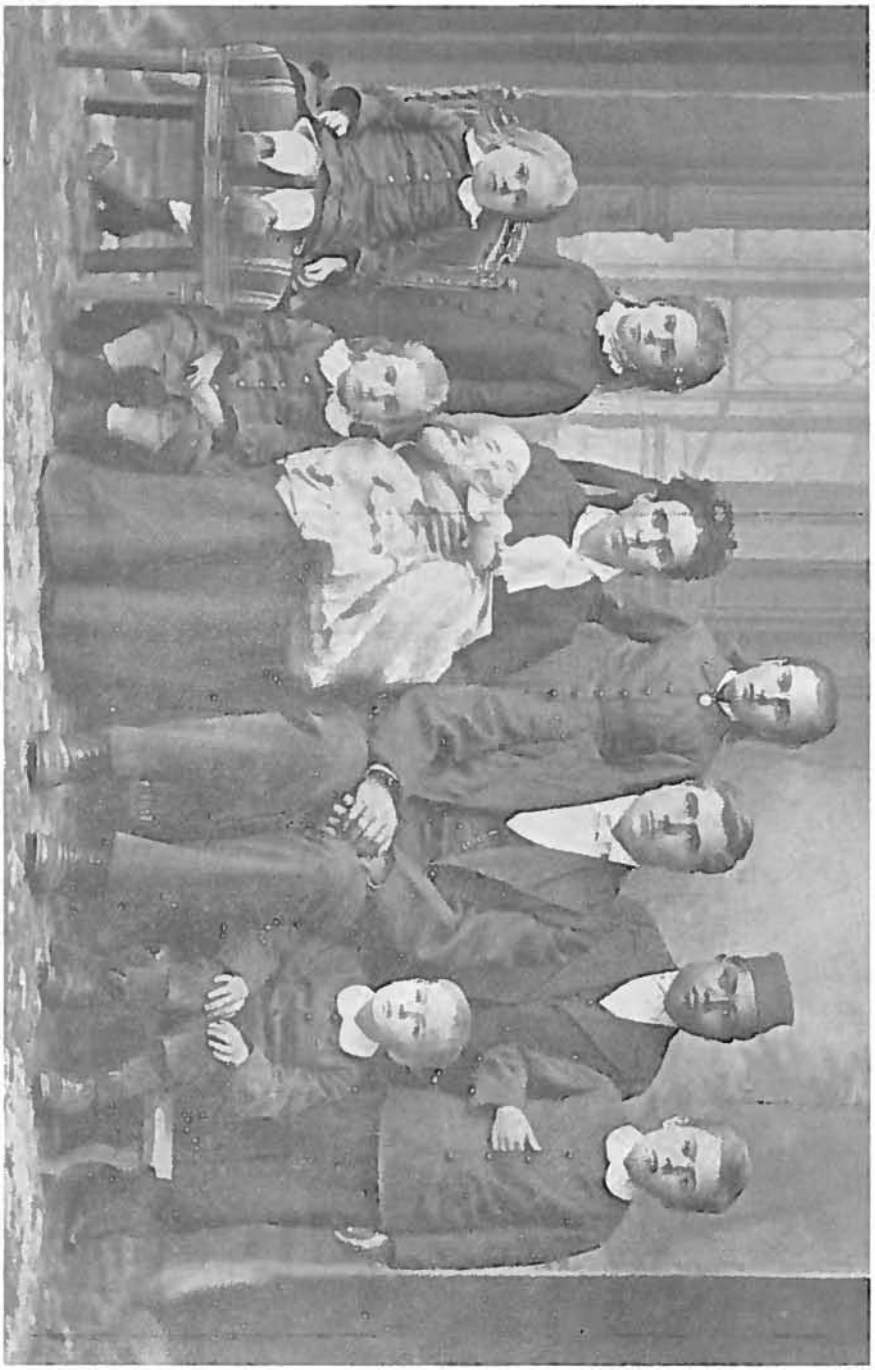
We present this chapter largely word for word according to submissions received from the hand of the venerable senior of Russian-Mennonite missionaries, the present elder of the Gnadenfeld congregation, Heinrich Dirks. He writes:

The Mission of the Anabaptists and Mennonites in the Dutch Indies

Presented by Heinrich Dirks, Sr.

§300 1. The Missionary Society among the Anabaptists of Holland was formed in 1849. It had developed out of an Aid Society of the English Baptists [1] which had existed in Holland since 1824,[2] and had been largely supported by the Anabaptists. The Aid Society, which originally prospered, gradually began to decline, and it was feared that it would soon come to an end. It was at this time that members of the Society in Amsterdam—Prof. S. Mueller, Prof. W. Cnoop-Koopmans, J. Slagrege and A. de Haan—expressed the desire to give a different direction to the existing missionary interest among many Anabaptist brethren in Holland. They also desired to awaken among others, if possible, the still-slumbering love for this holy work through the founding of an independent society for the promotion of the Gospel in the Dutch Indies. The brethren mentioned above now called upon the gentlemen A. Doyer, J. Boeke, J. van Gilse, C.P. Van Eeghen and W.P. van Lennep to join them in the attempt of founding a missionary society. These expressed their readiness, and unitedly they formed the new society. They elected Professor Mueller as president, de Haan and van Eeghen as treasurers, and Boeke as secretary. From the beginning the Society enjoyed not only the approval and participation of many congregations and their ministers of the fatherland (Holland), but also the approval of the sister-congregations in Germany. Soon an Anabaptist brother, Peter Jansz, a teacher from Delft, offered his services to the Society so that he might serve in the spirit of the new Society. The Society gladly accepted this brother as a trainee. He began his preparatory studies immediately; under the guidance of a competent teacher he made special efforts to

learn the Javanese language. After his marriage to Sister J.W.F. Schmilan, he was sent out by the Society in May, 1851, to Java as the first missionary (of "all Mennonites!"). During the first year of his stay in Java, Br. P. Jansz served as a teacher in a school on a landed estate at Sumbring, near Japara, which belonged to a certain Mr. Sukian. This gentleman was an Armenian by birth, but had accepted the evangelical faith in Java. He had 8,000 Javanese working on his estates. It was Jansz's responsibility to teach their children, but alongside this work he also preached the Gospel. On April 16, 1854, he was able to present to the Lord the first five baptismal candidates and on the 17th he observed the Lord's Supper with them. That was the beginning of a slowly-growing church. In 1854 the Society received its first contribution from South-Russia, specifically from Gnadenfeld. These churches had previously sent donations to the Baptist Missionary Society in England and to other German evangelical missionary societies. Now this support stopped, and the donations for missions henceforth were directed to the Anabaptist Missionary Society of Holland. In 1854 the Society received three hundred Taler from Gnadenfeld.[3] The following writing accompanied the gift: "With real joy we have read in these days excerpts from the report of your Society, sent to us by a friend in Prussia. Above all, we rejoiced to conclude from the report that the Lord, who has bought us with His blood, also has in Holland His own among our brethren, who confess with us the same faith, and who as living branches, united with Him, the true vine, draw their sap from Him and bear fruit. Since we also have the undeserved privilege to stand under the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, who manifests Himself powerfully among us, we gladly desire to be grateful to the Lord, who is dear to us, and to serve Him. As a result, a missionary society has been established among us several years ago. Since we have learned to know you, our brethren in Holland, in the manner mentioned above, we feel constrained to extend to you herewith the hand of brotherhood. Until now we distributed the funds, which have been gathered in our midst for missions, among various missionary societies of Germany. We now send you the enclosed amount, and declare our readiness, confident of the Lord's gracious help, to contribute this form of assistance out of our treasury more frequently in the event that you have need of it and inform us about it. And now, beloved brethren, accept us in the Lord, pray for us, that the Lord may expand His Kingdom among us, and that He keep us in His truth." This, then, is the beginning of cooperation in missions between the South Russian Mennonites and their fellow-believers in Holland. Later, the Anabaptist Missionary Society in Amsterdam received numerous gifts from the South Russian Mennonite congregations. The Alexanderwohl Church, which largely emigrated to America, was also an early missionary church.



Missionary Heinrich Dirks with his family and Batta Christian in the year 1881.



a) Johann Fast of Ohrloff, Molotschna Missionary in Java.



b) Peter Jansz (1820-1904), first missionary of the Anabaptists since 1851, translator of the Bible into Javanese, Knight of the Royal Dutch Order of the Lion.

§301 2. Missionary Jansz continued to work under God's blessing. In 1856 a diligent and faithful co-worker, Br. H.C. Klinkert, joined him and in 1863 the Anabaptist Missionary Society sent out a third missionary by the name of Schurmans. In the meantime Jansz had moved from Sumbring, the estate of Sukian, to the city of Japara, where he continued to work faithfully as a missionary. In 1858 the congregation was composed of thirty-two members. Klinkert, and later Schurmans, supported him in the work of the Lord, until the former entered the service of the British Bible Society, and the latter had to return to his fatherland because of mental illness. P.A. Jansz, son of P. Jansz, who had prepared himself in Holland for the teaching and missionary ministry, arrived in Japara in 1877 and served with his father as teacher and missionary. The older Jansz had written a booklet entitled *Evangelisatie door middel van Land ontginning* (Ongoing Evangelization throughout the Middle of the Land). In it he proposed a new missionary method which would combine the preaching of the Gospel with instruction in agriculture. With the permission of the missionary society, the younger Jansz began such a project. On a large piece of land of wilderness and forest, a colony was founded in 1882 for such Javanese who either were or wanted to become Christians. Alongside the settlement the mission station Mergaredjo was established. Of the 157 Christians (the fruit of the work of the older and younger Jansz, as well as of the brethren Klinkert and Schurmans) who were found in various places of the Residentie Japara, some moved into the new mission station Mergaredjo (the name means "way to happiness"). Those Javanese who desired to become Christians came and settled on the large piece of land which the missionary had acquired in hereditary tenancy and brought it under cultivation. Soon a colony was established near the station Mergaredjo in which baptized and unbaptized Christian Javanese dwelt together. They constituted a civilian congregation under one Lurah (colony elder). All colonists were contractually obligated to come to hear the Word, to send their children to school, not to smoke opium, not to live immorally—in short, to submit to the prescribed Christian order. Only those were to be baptized who, in the judgment of the missionary, were true believers.

§302 3. Now, after twenty-six years of labor by missionary P.A. Jansz, there exists at Mergaredjo and in the colony on the adjoining leased land and the nearby Baujutava a Christian population of 1168 souls. In this mission Jansz had been assisted by a second missionary, initially by Johann Fast[4] [from South Russia, Ohrloff congregation]; later, when Fast took a furlough in his South Russian homeland, by Johannes Klassen [also from the Molotschna]; and after Klassen, who also spent a

few years in his homeland, by Nikolai Thiessen [South Russian Mennonite]. Of the 1168 souls, however, only 433 are baptized church members or children of baptized members, since the missionaries there are very careful in the administration of baptism, desiring to baptize only true believers. A second mission station of Anabaptists and Mennonites in the Residentie Japara in Java, which resembles Mergaredjo in that it also has a Christian missions colony in close proximity, is Kedung Pendjalin. Here Johann Huebert [from the Lichtenau congregation] has worked as a missionary since 1893. When Huebert began his work here, a small number of Christians already existed in the area. Now, after a ministry of sixteen years, a Christian church of 507 souls and a prosperous colony on leased land are to be found there. In this colony there are also a few who call themselves Christians and submit to Christian regulations, but are not yet baptized. A Dutch brother deBoer (pronounced "Boor") is the administrator on both leased areas of our mission in Java, so that the work on them is proceeding properly. The third mission station of Anabaptists and Mennonites in Java is called Kajuapu. Here missionary Johann Fast labored for six years, after he returned to Java after his first visit to his South Russian homeland. He established a station; there were already a few Christians there, and now there is a small congregation of 111 souls. On all three stations of the Anabaptists and Mennonites in Java there are flourishing schools. The large school at Mergaredjo, which consists of an elementary and secondary school, is attended by more than 200 students; the school at Kedung Pendjalin by 130; the school at Kajuapu by 60.

§303 4. Each of the three mentioned stations has a small hospital in which many patients are treated by the missionaries, not only with physical medicine, but also with the spiritual medicine of the Gospel and of the Word of God. Since the missionaries are only imperfect physicians because they have not been fully trained as doctors, the Anabaptist Missionary Society has engaged a fully trained doctor, Br. D.H. Bervoets (pronounced "Berfuts"), at the Residentie Japara in Java. Doctor Bervoets had practiced medicine in Java for six years and had established a good reputation through his performance. He has the responsibility of establishing a large hospital between Mergaredjo and Kedung Pendjalin at the Dessa Kelat—in which not only general patients are to be treated, but also the seriously ill, who cannot receive adequate help in the hospitals on the stations because of the limited medical knowledge of the missionaries. He is also establishing a leprosy asylum. With the medical remedies, Dr. Bervoets, a man of positive faith, will apply the spiritual remedies, the gospel and the Word of God,

in order to heal the patients not only physically, but also spiritually. The work is carried on under the name (Dutch) "Medische Zending."[5] The missions committee of the Anabaptists in Amsterdam and other missionary friends in Holland have, in a short time, collected between thirty and forty thousand guilders[6] to cover the construction costs of the projected large missions hospital and the asylum for lepers. Even the queen of Holland, who is a friend of missions, has already contributed forty thousand guilders to the medical mission under Bervoets. A new missionary for Java is J. Siemens [South Russian Mennonite] whose young wife is Sister Marie Dick of Brotzky. He shall, God willing, establish a new mission station at Mergakarta or elsewhere. Also, the missionary candidate P. Loewen, who comes from the Halbstadt Church, whom the Halbstadt Church supported in his studies at the Missions House at Neukirchen, and who is presently studying at the Missions House in Rotterdam, has been assigned to Java. After he has been sent out, he will probably establish a new mission station or be given an assignment at the large missions school at Mergaredjo, since P.A. Jansz is advanced in years and overworked, and in need of assistance at the large school. The two mission sisters, Helena Goossen and Susi Richert,[7] have also been assigned to Java. In accordance with the decision of Dr. H. Bervoets, they shall, God willing, become supervisory deaconesses, one in the hospital at Mergaredjo, and the other in the hospital at Kedung Pendjalin.

§304 5. On Java's neighboring island, Sumatra,[8] the Anabaptists and Mennonites of Europe have a second mission field, namely in the district of Pakanten, in the Residentie Tapanuli just about at the equator. The station located in this district bears the name Huta Bargot (palm city). This station was established by me, H. Dirks,[9] in 1871 on a long hill at whose northern end Mount Magogar rises, completely covered with primeval forest, and considered to be a holy mountain. Four large villages—Huta Dollok, Huta Lombang, Huta Toras, and Huta Padang—are located near the station; several smaller villages lie farther away. The district of Pakanten, surrounded by high mountains—of which Sikulabo, Si Ledang, and Si Maidaid are the highest— is a circular plateau, crossed by the river Batanggadis, whose tributaries are Aek Pakanten and Aek Donok. Hence, the plateau is ideally suited for rice plantations, since there is no shortage of water for irrigating the fields. The whole round area, with a diameter of about seven to eight paal (ten kilometers), is therefore an inter-connected rice field. Sawah on Sawah, i.e., one irrigated rice field after another, is found there which usually produces rich harvests for its owners. On the mountain slopes and in the ravines between the mountains the people have their coffee and

vegetable gardens, dry rice, corn and potato fields. They also pasture their animals—buffalos, cattle, goats—on and between the mountains. Since Pakanten lies 2,100 feet above sea level, the climate is good and the heat not too excessive. The population belongs to the Batta people who, at the time of the establishment of the station, were still largely pagan—although there may have been about 100 Muslims even then. At that time not a single Christian could be found there. "Tinagassan ni Begu," I was told, "constitutes our religion," i.e., contrition before the Begus (veneration of the Begus). Begus are the spirits of the dead, whose descendants have celebrated a festival for them, at which the Datu has declared them to be Begus, in a certain sense as holy. But the pagan Battas also knew of a Debata, i.e., God, who dwelt in the highest heaven at a sea of molten lead, before whom the souls of men had to appear when they left their bodies at death. To him they appeal at the close of each prayer which they address to the Begus. This highest God they called Debata Manganahon, i.e., the God who lifts and bears all things. They also called him Debata Siassi, i.e., God, the Merciful. The place for the station that was given to me by the chiefs and priests(!!) was overgrown with man-sized alangalang (a kind of reedy grass) and scattered bushes in which wild animals—tigers, marten, wild boars, monkeys and small and large snakes—were still roaming around. The place where the station was to be established first had to be cleared of its wild underbrush with axe and gadubang (a long, strong and heavy chopping-knife) and Patjol (a strong, wide hoe). This involved a great deal of toil and sweat for the day-laborers whom we hired for this purpose. Out of round logs which were brought to us out of the native forest, and boards made out of the bark of trees and bamboo, together with long dry grass, we first built for ourselves a so-called lotse with a kitchen in it. Then followed a small house which we constructed from the same material, in which I dwelt with my small family (wife and child) as well as many rats, bats and where we were visited even by snakes—one of them about a fathom long. And yet life was more pleasant in this small house than in that of strangers, in which we had lived before ours was ready. It has happened, however, that tigers and musangs came to the station to get one of our few ducks (which we had bought) and one of our chickens (which we had acquired). Later, a large snake encircled a rooster in order to break his bones and devour him. The real residence, built of strong planks on piles, was completed only in the third year after the establishment of the station. Next followed the construction of a small church which had become very necessary, since in the meantime, as a result of the preaching of the Gospel, a Christian church, composed of natives, had been formed at Pakanten. During the first year of work at Pakanten, eight adults were converted, fathers and mothers, who could

be baptized and their children dedicated in a Christian manner. During the third year, eleven persons were baptized and a number of children were dedicated in the name of the Lord. By now the congregation had become large enough so that a church had to be built in which the worship services could be conducted, and which could also serve as a schoolroom. Until 1881[10] the congregation increased annually by several members, so that the congregation consisted of about 125 souls, after deducting those who had fallen away or died. In 1880 I acquired the "Holy Mountain," Magogar, on the northern end of the long hill, at the southern end of which the station was located, for the church, from the chiefs and priests. In the center of this mountain, in the shadow of several tall trees, a pointed stone protruded out of the earth. According to the opinion of the heathen, this was an animated stone, a so-called Pangulubalang. The soul of Boru-na-mora of the Radja Magogar (daughter of the Prince Magogar) was supposed to dwell in this stone since the time when she, out of love for her people and in order to combat a famine, permitted her body to be burnt to ashes by a Datu. The Datu, after mixing the ashes with water, and as a result of his bintoras (prayers), united her soul again. Then, by covering the pointed stone with the holy grease, he transplanted the soul into the stone. In a certain sense she was considered to be the patron goddess of the population of the village Huta Padang. Up to this time annual sacrifices of chickens, goats, fish, rice, coconuts and other fruits had been brought to her. Since no misfortune came to me and my loved ones in such close proximity of this Pangulubalang, and since we enjoyed good health during our stay there for the first several years, and since the Lord had blessed our marriage with children, and since our new garden at the station was flourishing—the people, and even the chiefs and priests believed that I was the Siparkanjuan of the Boru Magogar, i.e., her beloved, and she was blessing us. My protest against this was futile! Upon my request, the chiefs and priests gave this beautiful mountain and forest to me and the church. One fine day we began to bring this forest under cultivation, while the heathen came in large crowds to see how the Begus would take revenge on the Christians; but they had to return home disappointed, since nothing happened to the Christians. After the trees had been cut down, the brush cleared away, and everything had been thoroughly dried by the heat of the sun, it was ignited, resulting in a terrific conflagration, burning to ashes even the logs lying between the stumps. After the top crust of humus had been well mixed with the ashes by hoeing, the entire mountain was planted to coffee and china trees, banana plants and corn, sugar cane, ubi (sweet climbing potatoes), beans and other vegetables by me and members of the church. The missionaries G. Nikkel, and now Johann Thiessen, have added other useful trees and

plants: rubber and cinnamon trees, cloves and rame (a hemp-like plant) so that the whole Magogar is now a truly magnificent garden. A beautiful graveled road leads from the station to the Magogar where the orphanage and the old people's home stand in the foreground, and the cemetery of the Christian church is on the right. Brother Thiessen has now also received two holy Begu-forests for the church, and has planted coffee and clove trees and other useful plants in the ground prepared for this purpose. The mission school at Pakanten is attended by more than 100 students. In many of the affiliated stations there are smaller mission schools, which simultaneously also serve as houses of prayer. At the station Huta Borgott there is a hospital in which many patients are being treated. Brother Thiessen has half a dozen Christian co-workers (teachers, evangelists, colporteurs, medical attendants, superintendent of the orphanage and the asylum for the aged). The young missionary, David Dirks,[11] who has arrived there well and happy with his small family (wife and two children) and who has worked together with the J. Thiessens, has been assigned to the district of Gross-Mandheling, According to the directives of the missions committee, he shall now, God willing, move to Gross-Mandheling and establish a new mission station at Penjabungan. The princes and the population desire this very much [!], and the governor-general of the Dutch Indies has already given his permission for this.

The missionary candidate Peter Nachtigal, whose fiancee, the teacher Susi Franz, is still studying in the Rotterdam Missions House, has been assigned to the district of Klein-Mandheling.

§305 6. The total Christian church of the Anabaptists and Mennonites on the mission field of Sumatra has a membership of 337 souls, including the small affiliated church at Muarasicongi among the Ulu-people, who at one time have been won for the Lord through missionary Nikolai Wiebe[12] [from the Lichtenau congregation, Molotschna]. Since a number have kept the faith to the end and have died in the Lord—and now belong to the church triumphant—the results achieved by our missionaries and their assistants on Sumatra are substantial. To the Lord alone be the glory!

§306 7. Thus far the senior of South Russian Mennonite foreign missions. We add that after Br. Dirks' return in 1881, and until Br. G. Nickel (who has been residing in Russia again for many years, and presently serves as preacher in forestry camps) of the Rudnerweide congregation, took over the Pakanten station, Br. J. Ernst Irle, Reformed missionary of the Rhenish Missions Society, was in charge of the Pakanten mission station (from 1881 to 1888). Naturally he observed the Mennonite practice

(especially of the Gnadenfeld congregation): he dedicated the children and baptized believing adults. True alliance! (cf. #154, above).

8. Here we present the most important events from the life-story of our father of missions, Heinrich Dirks, as they have been personally and graciously submitted to us: §307

"Heinrich Dirks, son of David Dirks [of the old Brenkenhofswalde stock] was born in Gnadenfeld [Molotschna] on August 17, 1842. He was baptized by Elder August Lenzmann in the Gnadenfeld Church on May 12, 1860. From age five to thirteen he attended the Gnadenfeld village school. His teachers in this school were Peter J. Neufeld (deceased) and Abram Ediger (deceased). From age eighteen to twenty-one Heinrich Franz, Sr., was his teacher in the Gnadenfeld Society and private school. From age twenty-two to twenty-six he completed his studies at the Mission House at Barmen; his main teachers here were Doctor of Theology Friedrich Fabri, and Inspector Ludwig von Rhoden. After that he received private instruction for almost a year in the Dutch and Malay languages from several teachers in Amsterdam. In 1867 he was elected and ordained to the ministry in Gnadenfeld. On August 31, 1869, he received the ordination as elder and missionary from Elder August Lenzmann. From 1869 to 1881 he served as missionary. This includes his travels. Since 1881 until now (1910) he has served in the dual capacity as elder of his mother-church, Gnadenfeld, and as missions-preacher among his Mennonite people, insofar as they have not succumbed to separatism." (It is not that serious!!)

We add a few lines from his own hand that enhance certain aspects of his missions report, of his biography as a missionary, and of his ecclesiastical character-profile. "Gnadenfeld, August 23, 1910. Dear brother in the Lord! Immediately upon my return from Holland and Germany I sat down and prepared that which you requested for your historical work, and herewith I am sending it to you. That you also wish to include one of my letters (which I wrote you this year) in your history is acceptable to me [cf. *#137* (*2*) e above; we did not mention the name there without once again receiving special permission for this], for I and the Gnadenfeld congregation still stand as I have presented it in that particular letter, and thus it can also be recorded by the historian, even though perhaps some extreme Mennonites will find fault with us. I have learned to know the members of the missions committee in Amsterdam anew as kind, believing, and faithful men and brethren, who are firm and unmovable and continue to abound in the work of the Lord. We are also supposed to send them a copy of your history once it is ready. I am now an old missionary, placed in retirement by the committee. With their own money Dutch friends pay me an annual pension of 600 rubles! But I

shall continue to serve the Lord in missions also as a pensioned missionary. After four years I want to (if God also wills it) go back to Sumatra once more in order to visit our children there, as well as the Christian church and the people, and to proclaim to the latter once more the gospel of peace." God bless the dear old brother!

§308 9. We want to supplement and conclude the profile of the mission and its senior missionary with a message on missions by him.

"The Jesus-Fire
A short address given at a missions festival
by Heinrich Dirks, Sr.

"I address this reverent and festive gathering with the greeting of peace, and covet for all of us the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. And the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, may equip us—as for all good works—so also for the work of missions (in the interest of which we observe this festival) to do His will and working in us what is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory from everlasting to everlasting. Amen!

"At this missions festival I would again like to devote my message to missions. The words of the Savior in the gospel of Luke, chapter 12:49, shall provide the motivation. They read as follows: 'I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled.' According to these words of Christ, He has come to this earth for the purpose of kindling a fire; not a natural earthly fire, to be sure, but a supernatural, spiritual fire—especially the fire of the true knowledge of God, of truth and love, and of the eternal life and the Holy Spirit. Take the true knowledge of God, truth and love, eternal life and the Holy Spirit together—and you have the Jesus-fire. This fire was already burning within Him in the pre-earthly eternity, before the foundation of the world was laid. The constraining power of this fire compelled Him to leave heaven and come to earth, and by this constraining power He was motivated, while on this earth, so that He could not but kindle this fire also in the hearts of His fellowmen. In many He has been able to kindle it. Christians, as many as are true, living Christians, born again unto a living hope—preserving the mystery of faith in a good conscience, serving the Lord in the beauty of holiness and righteousness, as is pleasing to Him, and at the same time waiting for His blessed appearance—are kindled by the Jesus-fire. O that we too, without exception, would be kindled by this fire in our hearts! For it goes without saying, the one in whose heart the Jesus-fire burns also participates in missions; yes, he also helps the Jesus-fire to be kindled in the hearts of

non-Christians, as for instance among the heathen, Muslims and Jews. It is in the nature of fire to spread out more and more, to produce a bright glow, and to throw sparks for some distance through the air, which, when they come down, start a new fire—a new conflagration. This is also what happens when all of our hearts are kindled by the Jesus-fire. If this fire burns brightly and is ablaze within us, we shall cast a bright glow and kindle many more hearts around us. Then the sparks from our being shall be carried far through the air, across land and sea, into the world of the heathen and Muslims, and set it also on fire. To speak without a metaphor, then there will be brothers and sisters among us who, with the Jesus-fire in their hearts and the torch of the Gospel in their hands, will go out to the savage peoples of the pagans and Muslims and kindle the Jesus-fire there; parents, brothers, sisters and friends will not dissuade them or keep them back. Such a missionary who goes to the heathen is, in a certain sense, such a spark which flies away from the place where the Jesus-fire is burning with bright flames, to the non-Christian world where he comes down and ignites a new fire. The Lord is pleased when sparks fly like that. In the words '. . . would that it were already kindled' it is also implied that He is pleased with the sparks thus flying, since a rapidly-burning fire cannot be conceived of without throwing sparks. If the Savior desires nothing more keenly than that the fire which He came to kindle might truly burn, then it must be just as pleasing to Him that the sparks fly—that from there, where the fire already burns, missionaries be sent out. And, thus, in the words of the Savior, 'I came to cast a fire upon the earth and would that it were already kindled,' missions is commanded. The Savior desires that the fire which He has kindled burn brightly within us, that it flare up, that it rise high, that it cast sparks. Consequently, we must not fail to participate in missions in some way, if we claim to love the Lord. Participation in the work of missions is also evidence that one loves the Savior. He who does not take part in the work of missions hardly loves the Savior, or at least very little; and he who does not love the Savior, he who does not love Him dearly, is in a poor state—and more or less unhappy.

"And O! how much needs to be done in missions until the fire that Jesus has kindled will be burning everywhere throughout the whole earth. The population of the earth is estimated at 1,400,000,000 souls, and of these only 400,000,000 are Christians in whom the fire which Jesus has kindled burns, or could burn. The other 1,000,000,000 are still heathen, Muslims and Jews in whom the Jesus-fire cannot burn because they do not know the Lord Jesus—knowing nothing or too little about Him. No one should think, however, that the great multitude in whom the Jesus-fire does not burn as yet shall never be reached by this fire. No,

that would put an arbitrary restriction upon the words of the Savior, 'I came to cast fire upon the earth and would that it were already kindled!' The Lord Jesus wants to kindle His fire on the whole earth. The whole earth is meant, not a part of the earth, when He says: 'I came to cast fire upon the earth, and would that it were already kindled!' Everyone who is called man—all the descendants of Adam, all peoples and nations, the white and the black, the brown and the yellow—all, yes all, shall be set aflame by His fire; all shall become a reward of His sufferings. In order that this may be accomplished, sparks must fly from where the fire already burns, to where it does not burn as yet. Missionaries have to be sent out who will go to the non-Christian peoples. Missions must be propagated, for the very purpose of missions is to kindle the Jesus-fire on the whole earth among all peoples and nations. The work of missions is not in vain in the Lord; it will accomplish that which it is supposed to accomplish, namely that it will lead to the burning of the Jesus-fire on the whole earth. In the words of the Savior, 'I came to cast fire upon the earth, and would that it were already kindled!' —in these words of the Savior Himself, I say, is contained the hopeful indication that it will really come to that some day; that everywhere His fire shall burn. When the Savior says: 'I came to cast fire upon the earth, and would that it were already kindled!,' He does not doubt at all that some day His fire will burn upon the whole earth; He only deplores somewhat that it takes so long till this is accomplished. He desired, very much, that it should happen quickly. This desire we may share with Him—yes, and do whatever we can, that it may come more speedily. The word of the Savior: 'I came to cast fire upon the earth, and would that it were already kindled!' is not a mere wish that His fire might soon burn upon the whole earth, but a prophecy that it will actually happen, that His fire will burn upon the whole earth—a prophecy that in no way has found its complete fulfillment, but which will surely be fulfilled. The prophet Isaiah in spirit has seen this fulfillment when he says: 'And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.' There is the fulfillment; there the fire which Jesus kindles burns upon the whole earth. And because we know this our heart is lifted up, and we are not permitted to despise the time of small things in missions. Yes, my beloved in the Lord, it will come to that, it will be fulfilled that on the whole earth the fire of Jesus Christ will burn. Heaven and earth will resound with the jubilation and the hallelujah song of the redeemed of the Lord, and He uses missions to bring about this glorious consummation. Therefore, my beloved in the Lord, let us joyfully take part in the work of missions, and in this way help to fulfill the word of the Savior: '. . . and would that it were kindled!' First of all, let each one kindle and stir up the fire of Jesus Christ in his own heart, and then

let him further assist to kindle and fan the fire of Jesus Christ in others; also among the heathen and Muslims. This is the will of God for each one of us, and it is becoming for people who wish to be disciples of Him who has said: 'I came to cast fire upon the earth, and would that it were already kindled!' Through our missionaries whom we have in the Dutch Indies, on Java and Sumatra, already more than 2,500 heathen and Muslims have been led to experience the Jesus-fire in their hearts. Although it is rather weak in some, nevertheless it is burning, and the dear missionaries are stirring it up, that it may burn more strongly and brightly. O, it is a glorious, a marvelous work, the work of missions, insofar as the Jesus-fire is spread more and more upon the earth. With the following glorious mission song I close my address: 1) Oh, that Thy holy fire were burning, Savior in every waiting heart! Still all Thy people's anxious yearning, That they adore Thee, King and Lord. 2) Throughout the world already wakened many a heart is set aflame. Touched by the fire at Calv'ry glowing, Thy wondrous mercy to proclaim. 3) Thy heavenly rays of hope enlighten many a heart yet cold and lone; And to the weary, sin-sick wand'rer, Thy guiding light the way has shown. 4) Cleanse and revive, unite Thy people, all who Thy holy name adore. That by the light of Thy salvation, souls may be saved, yea! more and more. 5) Fountain of life, forever flowing, Breath of the mighty, living God! Thy holy flame of burning passion kindles a fire that quenches not. 6) Fuse all discordant hearts together; Thy kingdom's mighty temple build. Spread Thy bright flames of love and mercy, that all the world be glory filled. 7) Revive, enlighten, warm and kindle, Thy fire throughout the whole wide world. And show Thyself to every nation, as Savior, Prince of Peace and Lord! 8) Then there will rise the pray'r of millions, In songs of harmony and love. And all who on this earth are dwelling, The Lamb shall praise in heaven above. Yes, blessed J.L. Fricker, I and many others join in the supplication for the kindling and spreading of the Jesus-fire as expressed in this song. Amen!"

10. Missionaries of the Russian Mennonite Churches in the Dutch Indies Anabaptist Mission in 1910: §309

1. Heinrich Dirks, Sr. (in retirement).
2. Gerhard Nickel (returned to the homeland—preacher in forestry camps).
3. Nikolai Wiebe (returned to Europe—itinerant minister in West Prussia).
4. Johann Fast (in retirement).
5. Johannes Klassen and wife (active in Java).
6. Nikolai Thiessen and wife (active in Java).
7. Johann Hiebert and wife (active in Java).

8. Johann Siemens and wife (active in Java).
9. Peter Loewen (already active [?] in Java).
10. Missionary Helene Goossen (active in Java).
11. Missionary Susie Richert (active in Java).
12. Johann Thiessen and wife (active in Sumatra).
13. David Dirks and wife (active in Sumatra).
14. Peter Nachtigall and wife (already active [?] in Sumatra).

The number of Christians is 2,500 souls.

XXXVII.
FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH OF RUSSIA

This mission is twenty years younger than that which was started [13] by Br. H. Dirks on the "Sunda" islands. We present a report about this work from the pen of the father of this mission, Abraham Friesen, [14] missionary in retirement. It is given verbatim, but with very major abbreviations,[15] according to the wish of the honorable writer.

§310 1. Missionary interest in the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia:

Obedience to the command of the departing but omnipresent and omnipotent Master is the prerequisite for His blessed presence, rich in blessing, in the church of God through the Holy Spirit. The sense of missions and bringing salvation is thus the test of spiritual life and growth. As water, disturbed by the throwing of a stone, produces small, then ever larger circles, so also must be the missions activity of the believers: "Beginning in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, unto the ends of the earth."

The spiritual movement among the Mennonites in Russia (in the middle of the previous century), which in the course of time led to the organization of the "United Anabaptist Mennonite Brethren Church," awakened a healthy sense of missions [itinerant ministers, etc.]. The M.B. Church also demonstrated early participation in bringing salvation to the heathen. Prayer was offered for the salvation of the heathen, support was given and gathered for the indigenous ministers and sent to a missionary society. Meanwhile, the hope that a missionary might be sent out from their own midst became ever stronger among the brethren. When, in the summer of 1885, this writer and his wife volunteered [16] for this service, an old brother, a teacher, said, "We have been praying to God for a long time that He might make someone willing to go as our missionary to the heathen." This was the sentiment of the whole conference, as is evident from the correspondence cited in the next chapter.

2. The choice of a mission field and the sending forth of the first workers. §311

One of the most important and most difficult questions in the missionary efforts of the brethren was the choice of the mission field, since they were at that time largely unfamiliar with the heathen world and the various mission fields.

While looking for a mission field, this writer was guided by the facts that the M.B. Church was small, without practical experience in missionary work among the heathen, and the sense of mission was young. According to the circumstances of that time, a missionary work on the field of an Anabaptist-minded missionary society held much greater prospect of success than did an independent work. But the Lord had already chosen a place where we were to proclaim the joyful message of Jesus Christ.

The required subjects of study in the missionary school [17] included the English language which, for good reasons, is very important for every missionary and for us in India is indispensable. During the last two years of our studying I made use of the (English) missionary periodicals of the "American Baptist Missionary Union" so that I might improve myself in this language and at the same time gain knowledge concerning missions among the heathen. Through the reading of these periodicals my attention was drawn to the activities of the Union.

The leaders and instructors of the seminary, the brethren Philip Bickel, J. Lehmann and J. F. Fetzer, also believed that a missionary work in association with the Union would be a blessing for us.

Accordingly, on September 8, 1888, I wrote the following letter to the elders of the congregations in Einlage, Friedensfeld, and in the Molotschna: "As you know, with this school year we are completing our preparation for the work among the heathen. As a result, we are compelled, in all earnestness, to look for the place of our future activity. Since we do not belong to ourselves, but in the first place to our church and then to our fellowship, we cannot attempt anything until we have been precisely instructed as to what the brothers and sisters wish to do with regard to missionary work among the heathen; whether they wish to continue the usual practice of supporting missions only with their contributions or establish their own mission work. We are too weak to found our own mission work, but we are in a position to develop a richly blessed work among the poor heathen on a mission field of an Anabaptist-minded missionary society. This can be done if our entire, previously divided effort is concentrated on one issue—that of sending our own worker into the field which is ready for harvest. If the missions friends in our M.B. Church wish to begin a lasting, blessed missions

work, it is especially imperative that, in one spirit and with united strength, they all undertake such an effort in one place, carry it with prayerful hearts and support it as each one is able. In this way the work can flourish, grow and increase, even if it is begun on a very small scale."

The answers to this letter were very encouraging for us in this time of decision. On September 23 Br. David Schellenberg wrote, "I am very happy because of your readiness to serve the dear Lord among the heathen, and also because of your concern to find the best way for our working in foreign missions. For my part I am fully in agreement with your view. This year our harvest thanksgiving festival and the missions meetings in Rueckenau were very encouraging and full of blessing. The offering for missions among the heathen totaled 775 rubles. Shortly thereafter 233 rubles were given in Memrik."

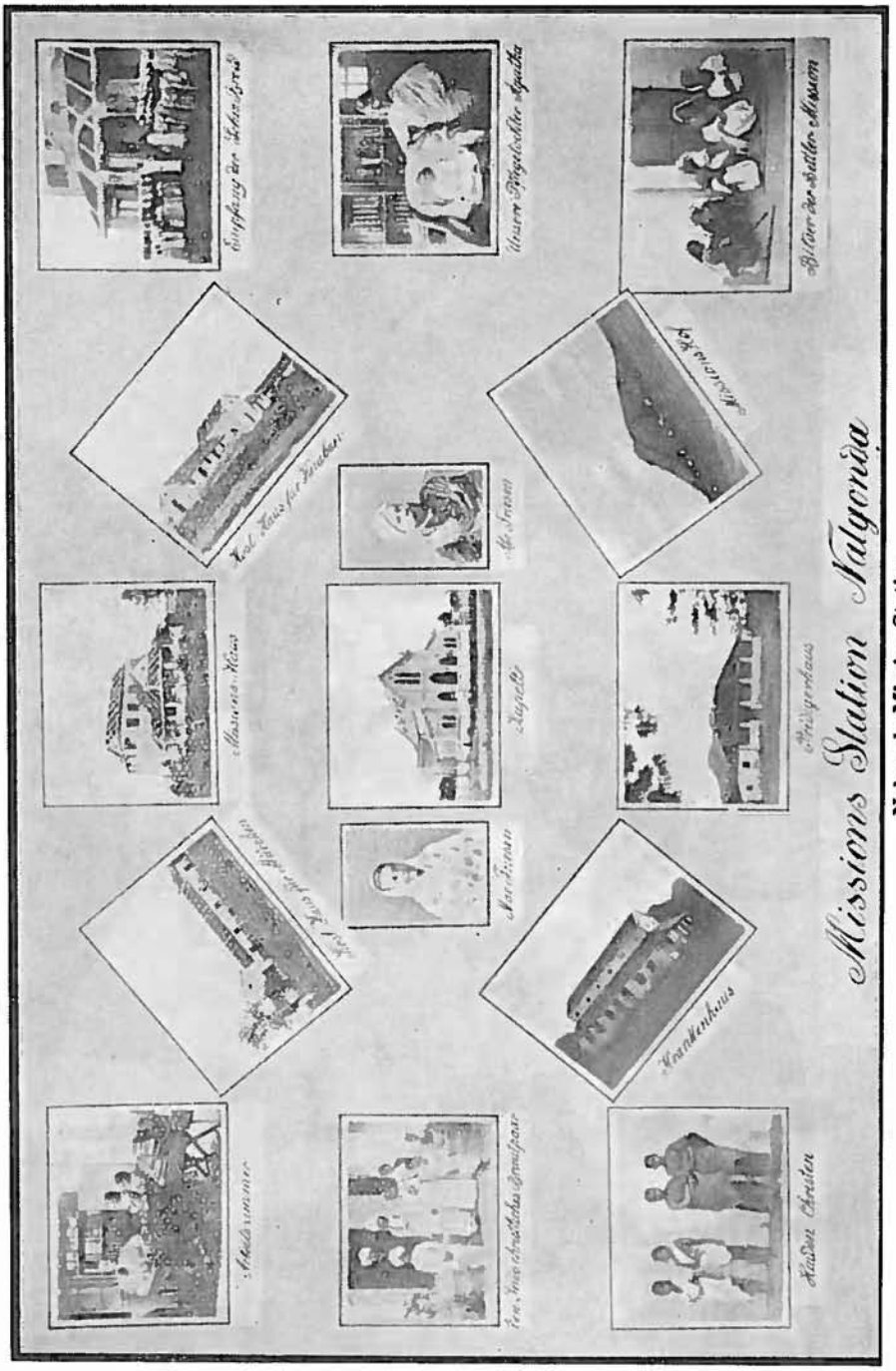
On October 1, 1888, Elder Aron Lepp wrote as follows: "I rejoice at your perseverance and zeal to serve the Lord. May the Lord our Savior grant His blessing for this. As soon as possible I shall ask for consideration of your wish; also, if I have time I shall discuss the matter with Br. Schellenberg." The last-mentioned writer, after he had considered the matter with his congregation, wrote the following encouraging letter: "On October 22 we had a meeting of the brotherhood in Rueckenau. Here, among other things, we considered the issues raised by your letter. Your concern, which you have long ago presented to the Lord, is in harmony with the wish of our congregation. As to where you shall go—this we leave to the guidance of our dear Lord and the counsel of brethren experienced in missionary matters. Herewith I am transmitting to you the decision of our congregation—that it would like to have you as well as your dear wife for work among the poor heathen, and declares itself ready to give support according to its ability. May the dear Lord grant you much joy and endurance in the work which has been begun. May He also give you a clear understanding of where you are to go."

Before we took the last step, however, and presented ourselves to the Union, I wrote to the congregation once again and reported that the Lord had directed our attention to the Telugus in Lower India. Thereupon I received the following response: "I received your letter on November 20. The congregation is also in favor of your going to Lower India, provided the dear Lord continues to give assurance that it is His will, and He has prepared the way for you to go there. Thus you may courageously go forward with the knowledge that you are not alone, but that you are accompanied by many a supplication and prayer for blessing for the poor who are still sitting in the shadow of death."

With this we turned to the Missionary Union and asked to be



a) Missionaries (Russian and American) of the Nalgonda Mission 1899.



Nalgonda Mission Station.

accepted. It was noted that the M.B. Church in Russia was willing to support us, and that we were representatives of this church. The leaders of the [Hamburg] seminary, as well as Professor A. Rauschenbusch, supported this request with their recommendations. In our letter we indicated that we would prefer to go to the Telugus, but otherwise were willing to go wherever we might be most needed.

In April 1889 the response from America came, stating that our request had been accepted and that we were appointed to work among the Telugus. As soon as we had received this cheering report, I wrote to Dr. Murdock, at that time secretary of the Union, to get more information concerning the place of our activities as well as our equipment.

At about this time we obtained a report of the Telugu mission for the year 1888. Several places in need of immediate help were mentioned. Nalgonda was also among these names. When we had read the short report about Nalgonda we were filled with a desire to begin the work there. From this time our hearts were in Nalgonda, and we prayed that the Lord might send us to Nalgonda for the following reasons: 1) Nalgonda was a relatively new field. We felt we were not in a position to lead an old mission field, and would prefer a new one so that we might grow with the work; 2) the Nalgonda field was presented as being very fertile and promising—something that would naturally be very attractive to a young worker.

The following letter from the Molotschna congregation came as a response to our report that we had been selected for work among the Telugus: "Dear brother, I have read your letter of April 25 in which you report the selection of your prospective field of labor to the brethren. The concern which you hint at concerning your future support we wish confidently to lay at the feet of Him who has said to us, 'Do not be worried,' and who Himself has said, 'I will not leave you nor forsake you.' Our brethren are not disturbed by the figures, and I believe that the dear Lord will provide the possibility to support as needed the missionary work begun among the poor heathen. After all, since the sense of missions increased even before we had our own messenger there, one may assume that this will also happen when our prayers will arise on behalf of a dear brother and sister who, far from home and fatherland, are faithfully working for Him who has done so much for us. It is a good sign that here and there a heart is touched to bring a hidden offering for the work. [Anonymous letters with gifts of 15, 25, 50 rubles and more for the mission.] So I have been instructed by our church to speak words of encouragement to you."

Br. Schellenberg wrote to us on behalf of the conference [annual

session, 1889]. "Everywhere people are supportive, so that we are able to believe that the dear Lord is leading. Some congregations have adopted definite goals; others will be giving support according to ability."

In the last week of the month of June, 1889, our hearts were filled with joy and thanks, since we had definitely been appointed to Nalgonda. After we had left Germany in the beginning of July, had remained in our homeland until October 2 and had visited several congregations who had provided us with travel funds as well as with support for one year, we left for India. On November 16 we landed in Madras and on December 5 we arrived in Secunderabad. We stationed ourselves here in Secunderabad so that we might learn the Telugu language. On October 25, 1890, we finally settled permanently in Nalgonda so that we might begin our glorious calling. But before this began, the Lord led us ways which were rich in blessing for the development of the missionary activity of our conference.

§312 3. The Relationship of the M.B. Churches of Russia to the Missionary Union.

a) To work together with this old and experienced missionary society, which has increasingly experienced the Lord's blessing, is not only a great privilege, but was for our situation at that time a definite leading of God. [We did not have] to make the mistakes often so fatal for the work because of our lack of missionary experience—mistakes which are common in new undertakings. The foundation had been laid; [we were] not restricted, however, in our freedom of conscience. The Lord has brought us together with a missionary society which grants us complete freedom in our evangelistic and pastoral activity, and generally does not set any conditions. The real tie that united the Union and the congregations of Russia was the desire to give to the heathen the saving gospel. [However] the Lord led us here in His work in such ways that a greater responsibility was placed upon the shoulders of the church. The Lord of the harvest moved in wonderful ways, which showed the guidance of the Spirit in missions. [The Union desired to retain Brother and Sister Friesen at the old stations; they could, however, not agree to this.] We felt an irresistible urge to go to Nalgonda; we had to go, whether we had the means for it or not, the Lord was too strong for us. But we passed through the night to the light. We can never forget our feelings as one evening when our need was greatest a cablegram arrived with the message: "Left Port Said on November 7th—Friesen." For us this meant: "Father is coming soon." Now everything was bright and clear, for we were convinced and were not to be disappointed: father did not only come as a beloved guest, but also as a helper in need. Whereas through the coming of our father the immediate need was alleviated, so

through his leaving the work of the Lord in Nalgonda received an abiding blessing in that he promoted the interest for this work among the congregations in Russia. Substantial funds were constantly coming to Nalgonda, and the donors were not only members of our church, but we also received smaller and larger sums of money from mission friends in other churches. What was most important was the fact that the interest in missions of the brethren and sisters was directed away from us to the land and people [whom father Friesen had learned to know through personal contact], and thus one felt a greater responsibility for the work. Before the Union had given a cent for the work in Nalgonda, the missionary friends from Russia had diligently sent their support. Even though the missionary society in Boston [seat of administration for the Union] has contributed large sums of money through the years for buildings as well as for the actual mission work (and is still doing so), it is, nevertheless, true that the independent action of the missionaries [of the M.B. Church] and the generous support of the churches have resulted in the Union considering this mission field primarily as the field of labor of the Mennonite Brethren. There is an understanding that as long as the latter will provide laborers for this field, no Americans will be sent here.

§313 b), Through the commissioning of the Abraham J. Hueberts in 1898 and the Heinrich Unruhs in 1899, the interest for the work of the Lord on this field was greatly enhanced and deepened among the churches in Russia, and giving continued to increase. To the extent that contributions in Russia increased, the Union naturally was able to divert its funds to other fields, and to transfer more responsibility to the brethren [i.e., the missionaries of the M.B. Church]. In the meantime, the Society in Boston has displayed forbearance and discretion. When the churches desired to send out Abraham J. Huebert, they believed that the time had come to take over full support for the brother. When several churches were not able to do this, the Society was kind enough not only to accept the Hueberts, but also the Unruhs, without conditions. At the time of the commissioning of the brethren Kornelius Unruh and Johann Wiens in the fall of 1904, we came to an agreement with the Union that we would bear the total costs of evangelistic work, and that they, on the other hand, would furnish the buildings and bear the total costs of the work among children and among the sick. Under these conditions the Abraham Hueberts were sent out for the second time in late summer, 1909, after they had labored hard in our midst for about a year. Commissioned with them was the young missionary couple Franz Wiens and Sister Anna Peters.

§314 c) The Missionary Union in America respects our distinctive position and does not restrict us in any way, but seeks to further us in the execution of our duty. We, on the other hand, confidently look up to the Missionary Society as our allies and teachers in mission work.

When we [missionary Abraham Friesen and wife] went to America after an association with the Union of about eight years, we were received with much more love and respect than we deserved, not only from the brethren in Boston [the overseers of the mission], but also by American Christians from all classes and conditions.

§315 d) We cannot close this chapter without expressing our high esteem and gratitude for the support in prayer and gifts by the Mennonite Brethren of America. The first donation for missions, which was sent directly to Nalgonda, came from our brothers and sisters in America. In the course of time, many other gifts have followed those earlier ones. [18] [The generous contributions of the Union, and of the Russian and American churches, provided the opportunity] to send ministers everywhere, thus producing marvellously large results.

In order to maintain, and where necessary, to deepen, this participation in missions among the Mennonite Brethren, we have unitedly in 1900 begun to publish a missions paper (*Das Erntefeld* [The Harvest Field]), which is constantly gaining more friends and currently has 1550 readers. In addition, we are distributing annually a booklet, *Unter den Telugus* (Among the Telugus).

§316 4. Evangelism

According to the Lord's commission, the task of missions has two parts: the preaching of the Gospel and the pastoral, or teaching ministry. All other aspects of missions, as for instance the work among the sick, education, etc., are auxiliary means in the work of missions. In this chapter I wish to speak about the first. The Nalgonda mission field is located in the south-eastern part of the Muslim kingdom of Hyderabad, comprising a geographical area of over 6,000 square miles. The approximately 700,000 inhabitants are distributed in about 2,000 central and subordinate villages. It is one of the driest, stoniest and hence poorest parts of the kingdom.

When we arrived here, Hyderabad was relatively poor in missions personnel compared to other parts of India. As far as Nalgonda was concerned, we were the only missionaries here until 1896. This field was visited by a Christian missionary for the first time in 1885. Brother W.W. Campbell, who founded the station Secunderabad, was the first Protestant missionary in the Kingdom of Hyderabad. It is almost

unheard of in Telugu missions that already after such a short time [in the second year] some persons [seven] should apply for baptism.

During the next year the work increased with giant strides. On a trip that Br. Campbell made, accompanied by Br. Maplesden who had come to Secunderabad from America as a second missionary, ten new converts were baptized. During the winter of this year Br. Maplesden made a trip by himself to this field. [Missionary Campbell had been forced to return to America because of illness.] He gave the following report: "We had the privilege of baptizing four times forty converts."

When Br. Maplesden made his next trip to Nalgonda in the winter of 1889-90, we were already in India, and upon his invitation accompanied him. This was a great incentive for us in the difficult task of language study. We had wonderful and very encouraging experiences: in a very short time we were able to baptize fifty souls into the death of Jesus.

Before we took over the Nalgonda station independently, I once more visited this affiliated station in June and, on that occasion, eight souls came to be baptized.

This then was the status of things when we arrived in Nalgonda on October 25, 1890: a large group of inexperienced Christians, and more than half a million heathen, many of whom—as experience had taught us—were hungry for the bread of life.

5. The visible success of the mission work in Nalgonda during the first few years of our ministry was very great. In 1891, 178 souls were baptized, and in the following year, 109. The Lord had provided abundant funds to carry on the itinerant ministry. §317

Thus God led that we soon had a numerically large congregation. It was very fortunate that, already during our study of the Telugu language, He had alerted us to the urgent necessity of caring for the young children in Christ, according to the second part of the missionary command of Christ: ". . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

On June 4, 1891, we joined together with 129 Christians to form a congregation. A number of those baptized earlier [by W.W. Campbell] remained outside the congregations for reasons of caste. It was a lack of knowledge that kept them from having public fellowship with converts of the lower caste. We had the great joy of being able to see that within one year almost all asked for admission. From then on we had no more difficulties with caste. Through this experience we learned, however, that as a rule one should not baptize more than one is able to instruct in the Word of God.

In a marvellous way the Lord had provided for native workers. Already during our language study the Lord brought two Telugu brethren to us. We took them along at the time, hoping that He would send us the necessary funds. Moreover, there were also those in the field who had the gifts and the joy for evangelistic work. In 1893 we had, because of construction work, little time for evangelistic trips; nevertheless, 200 members were added to the congregation that year. One of the most important means [for the growth of Christians] were the Bible courses with our co-workers—from six to eight weeks annually.

The monthly meetings, which were usually held on every first Sunday of the month, for which not only all workers were expected, but to which also members of our church came from far and near, also contributed much to the development of the believers.

§318 When, in the spring of 1897, we had to leave Nalgonda for the first time to find rest and recuperation in Russia, the congregation had 700 baptized members, a spacious house of prayer, two good school buildings (one for boys and one for girls), a modest, attractive hospital and a simple and sound residence. (All buildings were planned and constructed by us, with the bricks being baked on our mission compound.) At Nalgonda we had a well-organized, active congregation which supported its leading ministers. In the congregation there was a Sisters-Mission-Society for the purpose of fellowship and mutual edification, and collection for the poor women. Under the leadership of older brethren there was also a youth society in which young brethren and sisters were trained for participation in the mission. Moreover, there were a number of sisters who served as Bible-women and who brought the Word of God to the women, the children and the sick in Nalgonda and the surrounding area. Finally, as one of the most important branches of mission work, we had a large, well-organized week-day—and Sunday school in which we trained mission workers for the work of the Lord (elders, preachers, evangelists and Bible-women). On the field we had twenty affiliated stations where every Sunday the Word of God was preached for Christians and heathen by our dear Telugu workers, and where children were also instructed.

§319 6. In the beginning of 1898 the Abraham Hueberts went to Nalgonda, primarily to acquire the Telugu language. When we returned to India in the fall of 1899, we committed to the Hueberts the south-eastern part of our field with approximately 300 Christians. Sooriapett, a market town with about 4,000 inhabitants, was selected as the main station.

When we came back to India in 1899 the Heinrich Unruhs from Russia and the N.N. Hieberts and Sister Elise Neufeld from America also arrived at the same time. In the fall of 1900 we parted again. The whole western part of our field we gave to the American brethren and sisters who began their work near the city of Hyderabad. They soon founded a station in Nagur-Kurnool about 120 versts from Nalgonda. Now they are our neighbors to the west. The Heinrich Unruhs, however, selected a field north-east of Nalgonda, with Jangaon as the main station. This station has the advantage of being located near the railway. As a result, many tasks are made easier. Evangelism, on the other hand, is more difficult. The heathen near the railway have come in contact with western culture and with "European paganism." The greed of European merchants, the ruthless and disrespectful treatment of the natives on the part of European officials, the dissolute life of the European military—all these have given the name of Christ a foul smell among the heathen. Nevertheless, the Lord gives His blessing: there is now, on the Jangaon field, a congregation composed of about 200 members—with eight to ten affiliated stations.

In 1904, we again had to return to Russia for reasons of health. We left with heavy hearts. Even on our reduced field we now had four congregations, with well over 1,000 members. In our old homeland, two missionary couples—the Cornelius Unruhs and the Johann Wienses—and a single sister, Anna Epp, were waiting to be sent to India. (Anna Epp soon was married to the missionary of the American Mennonite Brethren, Br. Bergtholdt.) A year later we were able to follow these dear brothers and sisters and again resume our ministry. We had no premonition that our term of service would only last two and one-half years. With great pain we had to tear ourselves away from the work [because of Sister Friesen's illness]. As a result of a special, never-anticipated spiritual revival, 600 souls have come to Christ in this short time on our field alone. The Cornelius Unruhs were appointed to take over our work in Nalgonda. The field could not have been provided for in a better way. The Lord has done all things well!

Simultaneously with us, the Abraham Hueberts left the work to seek a well-deserved rest. Also, Sister Katharina Reimer, a gifted and industrious co-worker for our large school [who had accompanied them the last time], because of physical weakness and with a heavy heart, had to leave the land with which she had fallen in love. [Miss Reimer is at present teacher of religion at the Gnadenfeld girls' school.]

In the spring of 1908 the Heinrich Unruhs also came back to Russia for recuperation after having worked very hard for almost ten years. Now the work in India became very difficult: three large fields and only

two missionaries! But the Lord again had provided. In late summer of the same year the Abraham Hueberts were again prepared to return to India, and Brother and Sister Franz Wiens and Sister Anna Peters had made themselves available to the churches for work in India. These accompanied the Abraham Hueberts; Sister A. Peters went to work among the sick.

In the summer of 1910 the Johann Wiens family also had to leave India because of the severe illness of their daughter. This caused them deep inner sorrow.

The Heinrich Unruhs face the difficult question as to where they can leave their four oldest children in order to return again to their beloved work. The dear brother and sister would very much like to return, for the field is white unto harvest, but the laborers are few. The need to establish a home for the children of missionaries becomes more and more urgent. When the Wienses return with their two children, we will have eight dear children of our missionaries [this includes the two children of the A. Hueberts, who have been taken into custodial care by the H.J. Brauns of Neu-Halbstadt] for whom the churches have to provide, if the missionaries are to go out again.

§320 7. The present state of the mission. There are at present seven mission workers (including the wives of the missionaries) on the three stations of the field: Nalgonda, founded in 1890; Sooriapett, founded in 1900; and Jangaon, founded in 1902. The number of baptized members stands at 3,000 [December, 1910]. There are also seven returned mission workers at home (including the wives of missionaries). The oldest missionary couple [Abraham and Maria Friesen] have retired from active service and seek now to maintain and promote the interest in the churches for the work of the Lord in India, as well as at home, at mission festivals and other gatherings. We possess no reserve fund; the necessary money for the work is gathered by voluntary contributions.

8. Biographical. The senior member of M.B. Church missionaries, Abraham J. Friesen, was born on May 15, 1859, in the colony of Nieder-Chortitza, District of Chortitza. He was trained in the colony of Einlage (Kitschkas) where he attended the village school, having good teachers (Froese and others). Soon he was his father's right-hand-man in the latter's outstanding milling and construction business, as well as in the flourishing factory of agricultural implements. When he was twenty-four years old, "he could no longer resist," and together with his young wife, Maria, nee Martens (Blumenort-Blumenau), resolved, with the blessing of his father, to devote himself to foreign missions. This step involved no small sacrifice financially for both father and son. Abraham

Friesen completed a four-year course at the school for ministers at Hamburg-Horn. Mrs. Maria Friesen completed a three-year training course in other appropriate institutions there. (Also, other wives of Mennonite missionaries, or their fiancees, received a suitable preparation at the expense of the churches—a characteristic action.) All other missionaries of the Nalgonda Mission, with the exception of one, have also been trained at Hamburg-Horn. Br. Franz Wiens, we think, attended the Bible school in Berlin after attending secondary school.

9. The missionaries of the M.B. Church of Russia in the Nalgonda Mission in East India in 1910:

1. Abram Friesen and wife in retirement.
2. Heinrich Unruh and wife on furlough at home.
3. Johann Wiens and wife on furlough at home.
4. Missionary Katharina Reimer at home because of illness.
5. Abraham Huebert and wife on the mission field.
6. Kornelius Unruh and wife on the mission field.
7. Franz Wiens and wife on the mission field.
8. Missionary Anna Peters on the mission field.

In this mission, 117 native co-workers are active: elders, preachers, teachers and Bible-women.

H.

INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MENNONITES IN RUSSIA

XXXVIII.
THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

A. *The First Three Secondary School Teachers*

1. Tobias Voth §321

In the various preceding chapters we have frequently referred to the educational system, and mentioned this or that important teacher or promoter of the cause of education, as in the case of "Ohrloff," "Tobias Voth," "Ohrloff School Society" (see *##38-42* above) in the history of the Gnadenfeld congregation, of the "Brotherhood" before 1860 (see *##44-52* above) and in connection with the "Agricultural Society" (*#69* above). Here we wish to present in its context a uniform survey of the development of education, primarily in the form of life-profiles of outstanding educators. We begin with the autobiography of the nestor of our secondary school system, Tobias Voth, which we possess in a pamphlet written in his own hand. He writes:

a) The course of My Life

"I was born on July 16, 1791, in Brenkenhofswalde,[1] near Driesen, in the Mark Brandenburg. My father, who was minister there in the Mennonite Church, permitted me to acquire the essential rudiments of knowledge which I would some day need as a useful church member. Among others, I had two teachers (the one had studied in Leipzig, the other one in Berlin) who truly feared God, and who made good inpressions on my heart. My parents also encouraged me to a walk of piety. In the meantime, my childhood years passed, while I remained the same person. Still young, only 16 years old, I became school teacher at my birthplace and served in this capacity until 1812 [thus, for about five years]. After an examination sponsored by the royal government, I became cantor and school teacher in the city of Soldin [in the Province of Brandenburg]. During this time I married a Lutheran girl who is my present wife.

"When the French returned from Russia, schools were closed for

some time. My salary, part of which I received out of the treasury . . . [illegible word in the original] *pietatis* in Berlin, was embezzled by a recipient, and since the schools were closed we also received no school fees. In the meantime, I gave private lessons at the home of the president of the Supreme Court, Van der Reek. I was also employed in the office of the Supreme Court, since so many clerks had gone into the military as volunteers. Now my wife became mortally ill and spent more than three months in bed. When she had barely recovered, I came down with a neurosis for seven weeks. We had no money, and because of the general quartering (of soldiers) in that place, there was also general suffering. Only God knows what we experienced there, but we survived. When I began to improve, we travelled to my parents, who had heard nothing of all our distress. We had just arrived when my wife became ill again and was very miserable for twelve weeks. This time will remain important for us because it constituted such a severe testing. After that, we returned to our position.

"In 1814 the royal government granted me the position of cantor and teacher in Koenigsberg, in the Neumark. Here we got along well; I identified with the world. The constantly-increasing unbelief made me indifferent towards all my historical concepts of the Gospel. But the Lord had mercy on me before I was engulfed by this whirlpool. We withdrew from the world and began to think earnestly about the one thing that is essential. In 1818 I made a trip to visit my parents, and I brought back with me Stilling's biblical stories, from which I began to read aloud to my wife and sister-in-law. When I read the story of Jesus' suffering, I was touched by the grace of Jesus, and my wife and sister-in-law as well. We received mercy, and the Savior revealed Himself to us as the One who blots out sin, and as a friend. A blessed, unforgettable time!

"Since the world was now a cross to us, and we to the world, we were subjected to many persecutions, especially when it became known that we associated with the Nahausers (who lived in the village Nahaus, one mile from Koenigsberg) who were called the pious fanatics. Although these pious souls, as well as we, were cautious, we still came together occasionally for mutual edification. My ecclesiastical superior was dissatisfied, but eventually all became tired of the storms and stresses and left us in peace. In my position, however, they never found a cause to make me uneasy.

"At that time Elder Lange, who was from my native village, reported to me that at Komrau, near Graudenz, in the village where Elder Goertz lived (whom I already knew and loved), a teaching position was vacant. He wished that I would accept this position, for then I would be able to live among brethren. I accepted this and moved to Komrau. Since the public school in Graudenz, which had six classes, needed a teacher, the

administration requested that I accept the position, which I finally also did.[2] Here we got along very well, since we had an income of 500 Taler. Although we visited the believers who lived at Graudenz, this did not have any unpleasant consequences for us. After two years of our stay here, preacher N. and Elder Goertz came to me and informed me that in the Molotschna in Russia a school was to be established which should have a truly Christian direction.[3] They had the mandate to find a teacher for the school and therefore approached me as to whether I would take over the school. I agreed to this and, as a result, a call was extended to me shortly afterwards by the governors of the planned school in Russia, which I accepted. For seven years [from 1822 to 1829] I have served this school. In the beginning the school received support (although generally from very few people), partly because it was something new, partly because there was as yet no dearth of funds. Eventually everything declined, there were crop failures, and everyone complained about the lack of money. People were unable to pay for the board and room of children, and the number of those who remained supportive became very small. Moreover, there were opponents of the school and these increased in number. I realized that I could not be of much use any more, since the school began to stand emtpy. Often I considered the question: What shall I do now? Daily my wife and I prayed to the Lord that He would again guide us to a position, wherever His will might take us, and entreated Him that He would keep us in His service to promote the kingdom of God. In the meantime, no work turned up for me, and occasionally this gave us anxious cares. On top of all this, our ten-year-old daughter died. All this had humbled us very much. One day the associate administrator of the Lutheran colony-district, Walter, came to me and declared that on that day all the mayors of his district had been called together to consider the question, whether they were not willing to establish a main school for their district and call me to be the teacher of the same since I was now unemployed. He added that the mayors had decided that they would continue to work for this project and gather contributions if I would accept; this is why he had been sent to me. I replied that if they were successful with the projected school, I would accept. However, they were not successful, partly because of lack of funds, and partly because of divisions. I had been waiting and fall was approaching. I had to leave my residence because another teacher was to move into it, one who should teach primarily in the Russian language. At that time I made a trip to visit Br. Cornelius Jantzen in Schoenwiese, a distance of 100 versts. He told me that a little house with a garden was to be sold there. I bought it and moved there. But what should I do now? I would like to teach children and my residence was not big enough for that; there was nothing left to do but build another house—sixty feet long and thirty-three feet wide. Confident of the Lord's help, I began. . . .

Thus the schoolhouse was completed, but I went into debt. There my house stands now, built with a thousand sighs to God, and I am waiting to see what will become of the school. There are still people who would like to send their children, but the shortage of money is so severe that no start can be made. In the meantime, in order to earn a little, I have been tuning pianos for the nobles living around us, but because of disease and restrictions [cholera or plague? and quarantine], this has been interrupted. I am not skilled in any trade so that I could thereby provide for my wife and seven children. If a school does not provide me with an occupation and bread, then I do not know how things can go on. During the years when I resided in Ohrloff, I have conducted prayer meetings in which I often spoke about faith and God's providence. Now again, more than ever, the Lord has put me to the test, whether I firmly believe what I have taught others. Truly, He tests well; it appears as if there is nothing for me to do or to hope. Things here are completely different from my fatherland; there I knew the language of the land and could find my livelihood anywhere. Now I have to look wholly to the invisible, and for a year and a half my natural eye sees nothing. It appears as though the Lord has dismissed me from His service and the work of the kingdom of God. It also appears that I am a man who cannot provide for the necessities of life and this will cause the world to rejoice, that I have been confounded in my faith. Here the call comes: Where is your faith? I can say, to the praise of the Lord, that I am usually at peace. On the other hand, I cannot deny that at various times I had to call: Lord! help my unbelief.

"Yes, yes, He will not forsake me, the all-merciful Father of His children. His rod of chastisement is good; He purposes only eternal salvation and leads us rightly into our nothingness. I can see and feel how good and beneficial this discipline is. All things last for a while, then they change again, and the Lord knows the proper time.

"Before I began to build, I constantly prayed that God should prevent me from building if it were contrary to His will. He has permitted me to build. There is a house now with two classrooms which could accommodate many pupils. But where are our earlier hopes—everything seems to be different now. A few years ago a *tschetwert* (ca. 400 lbs.) of rye was priced from two to four rubles—now it costs fourteen rubles. The trades come more and more into a state of stagnation, to which the restrictions (because of diseases) contribute. Today, however, on this 10th of January [1831], Alexandrovsk, which is separated from Schoenwiese only by the Moskovka (a tributary of the Dnieper), has been opened, and the sudden dying has ceased.

"While I was building, I thought that there would perhaps be Christian hearts who would want to support a school in which, among

others, also the poor and the orphans[4] could receive instruction without financial obligation. Schoenwiese is in a certain sense a center between the German colonies located on the Molotschna and in the District of Chortitza. It is still probable that my projected school is at the right place. Meanwhile, my intentions are somewhat like the silk-worm which, if it wants to spin, needs twigs to begin its threads.

"God, Father of your children, You have the twigs which I and my school require; before Thee I lay down my needs. I gladly want to work, here or elsewhere; only for work I am pleading, for work which I can manage!

"Should my school be established, the following subjects would, in my opinion, meet the existing needs here for the time being:

1. Religion. Note: Since there may be Lutherans, Reformed, and Mennonites here, instruction in religion would not be based on confessional statements, but on religion: it would be concerned with the state of the heart, and what man may have in Jesus, our Savior. This would be the goal of our work. 2. Biblical history. 3. Reading. 4. Penmanship. 5. Arithmetic. 6. German grammar. Note: if a sufficiently large number of students should participate to make it possible, a private tutor would give instruction in the Russian language.
7. Singing, either according to numbers or notes, with emphasis on church melodies.

"The demands would show what would have to be added by way of drawing, geography, etc.

Tobias Voth"

This life-story had been written in order to be sent to Pastor Rosenstrauch in Kharkov, as we have learned from another pamphlet by his pen, with copies, or rough drafts, of his letters. Excerpts from these letters follow, but first we present something from another pamphlet, a kind of memorandum, in which the whole gray prosaic aspects of his life (especially during his last years in Ohrloff) but also his deep and genuine piety, are revealed.

b) Memorandum of Tobias Voth §322

"1. For a number of months I have been placed in a position where I have found it necessary seriously to examine myself, whether or not I can and must continue here as teacher of the school of the [Ohrloff] School Society. By the mercy of my Savior my inner feeling is that I really want to fulfill God's will. Therefore (I can say this), I have prayed night and day: Lord, teach me to know and do your will, let me know in my heart what I shall do, whether I shall remain here or move away. You Yourself lead in my cause. I desire that Your will be accomplished in me,

even then when it should hurt the flesh. . . . How happy I am for the consolation: 'But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' Yes Lord, my Savior, You have also overcome my difficulties, which I lay at your feet, and You will bring my cause to a glorious end. Should I have need of more cross and suffering, You cannot remove the cup from me for I realize that it would be harmful for me. But if sufferings are to decrease, then men will not be able to change that.

"2. To you, my Savior, my intentions, which I have had for my school or the school of the Society, are known. You also know my diligence, You know my will, and You will not go into judgment with me. I know that You have also blessed my work; whether people see it, I do not know. Some people have seen it and testified to the blessing.[5] O, the words which You have given me will bring blessing—only my own are unprofitable.

"3. From the members of the Society I have formerly received praise, but now also severe censure. My views and my devotion are as they were formerly; therefore, I firmly believe that formerly I did not deserve praise, and now I do not deserve censure. My Savior knows what I mean, and so do alert people. Such people will not get the idea that I am of the opinion I am blameless before God. I see in myself a big sinner, full of mistakes and shortcomings, but reconciled in Christ, with whose precious blood I have been redeemed from sin and elected to salvation. In Christ I see myself as one who is free from guilt and penalty, because He has done enough for me.

"5. As well as I could, I have served the School Society now for seven years. I worked early and late, in the evenings outside of regular school hours. I did it with love and rejoiced. Through my work, through much speaking and singing, my health has suffered, my chest has become weak, and I often have to suffer pain. I suffer gladly, for He that has given me my body and my health, has also given me now my (sick) chest. If it is to be restored, this will happen. People are not to blame, and what is given to me by God is good.

"6. . . . Initially adults came to the evening school, but as time went on, they stayed away. In the beginning they also came to the missions prayer meeting, which was really founded by Cornies. It was actually he who asked me to conduct them, and once he even prayed aloud. However, he soon stayed away. Others did the same until I remained alone with my own. At first students also came, initially fewer, later more, up to sixty. But now the school declined, and during the winter of 1828-29, there were only from eight to ten. [The reason—as indicated in his life-story.]

"8. . . . Formerly we [the Society and Cornies] agreed concerning the

cause. Now an enemy has come in between. . . . During the winter Cornies said to me: You have a bias against the Society, and the Society against you. . . . On January 31 [1829] several gathered at my place [upon the invitation of the chairman of the Society]. Cornies, who was the spokesman, said: 'You must conduct school in a manly way, better, with greater enthusiasm, and if you will teach school in a better way, then there will also be firewood.' [Concerning 'firewood,' see below.] When I did not accept the accusations, he said: 'Nothing can be done with him today; I will . . . return after fourteen days. In the meantime, he better think it over. It will either have to turn out this way, or some other way. . . . ' He talked much about the school, that it would have to be conducted properly, and with greater diligence, punctuality, and manliness. I listened to everything quietly, but claimed that I had done that which I knew and was able to do. I had not conducted school like a boy (in contradistinction to 'manly'). He replied: 'As you will, also as a boy.' Thus we parted; in appearance as friends, but the treatment was not friendly. . . . I realized that my usefulness here would be small or even nil, and therefore I wrote on April 13 that for the coming school year I would resign from my position. . . . [In the School Society people are surprised, consider this or that. It appears as if in school collisions have occurred with his family, or concerning his family.]

"9. . . . [He leaves] . . . And when at times I become anxious . . . You [God] comfort me. . . . ' Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. . . . '

"10. Now I wish to elaborate on a few difficulties which I have had. . . . An important issue is fuel [!!]. At times we have been forced to freeze, and have not been able to cook. . . . During the summer I, with my children, have been compelled to pick up and haul fuel from the steppes; or we had to drive to good friends and ask them to let us have some. This we would have to bring home on the carriage. It will be wholesome when these disagreeable things will stop. . . .

"11. In _____s we have neighbors (a step from us) who alone could drive me away. If I could still be a blessing here, they should not drive me away. Now, however, because I have to be idle, their cursing may contribute to my moving away, the sooner the better. Only the coarsest class of people could be capable of such curses. We avoid them as the evil one; no one has even the least thing to do with them, yet they always have something. You hear them make noises, cursing that the thunder would strike us many fathoms deep into the earth. They even wanted to pierce us with a manure fork. My son, Julius, has been terribly mistreated by him; he has twisted his ears and beaten his head.

"12. [The school teacher of the Society has to be a herder at night,

and water the cattle of the village.] The neighbors [so the landlords were called] and others residing in the village at times had to water the cattle of the village in the Juschanlee. Several times a year this was also my duty, as well as watching the horses at night and riding the steppes to drive away stray cattle. Since day-laborers are very scarce here and I cannot hire any, I always get into such embarrassment and difficulty that my stay here becomes very bitter.

"13. We reside almost one verst from the village; the cowherd seldom comes to fetch our cattle. Sometimes he lets them stay, if he is not paid every morning. [etc., etc., the most dismal vexations. It would appear to us that at this place too a little "cherchez la femme" may be found].

[We can truly see that the earth "moves nevertheless," also in the Mennonite school-world, as secondary school teacher C.A.W. recently claimed in a newspaper article. Our secondary school teachers do not have to gather cow-dung on the field any more, nor do they have to ride the steppes or perform service for the village as night watchmen for horses!]

"14. [Didactic and pedagogical thoughts.] In regular city schools where students are divided into classes according to their abilities, one has all the advantages in influencing students. Moreover, students attend school more regularly there. Here it is altogether different; the pupil enters quite unrefined, and sits together in the same class with the more advanced. Instruction has to be divided to meet the needs of each individual. . . . With such difficulties I have always had to contend here. It has also happened that I have had a number of boys who had limited powers of comprehension. I know for certain, however, that even these have not gone away empty.

"There are also those among the children with a rude and insensitive disposition, where serious conduct, sharp reprimands, urgent exhortations, and good examples do not influence them. Such children need to receive corporal punishment, according to the teaching of the Holy Scripture where we read, 'Bow down his neck, while he is still young; beat him soundly, while he is still a child, or he may grow up stubborn and disobey you.' Sirach 30:12. Towards children who have been treated in this manner, I have been too soft, and I am blaming myself because of this. [O, the dear man! Others also blame themselves, but for the opposite reason! This was perhaps the weakness which caused Cornies to demand: "Like a man, like a man, must one conduct school." The successors, or rivals of T. Voth—Heinrich Heese, Sr., and especially Heinrich Franz, Sr.—have substituted for Voth's minus their plus.] It is difficult to be a teacher of such children, especially since the parents often do not know their own children. . . .

"O God, raise up my weakness, teach me to do that which is right, as it is pleasing in Your sight. According to Your great love forgive me where I have failed! The art of training is a big one; it requires divine wisdom. The teacher has to look into the nature of the child, and discipline and train it according to its real need.

"15. [Observations about the state of the church.] Our people, or perhaps better, our fellow-believers, the Mennonites, should, according to their true constitution, form a congregation of the Lord, which in all possible ways perfects itself in godliness. But how is this congregation divided by lack of love, various views, etc. [cf. *#59* above]. The believing and childlike approach to the Lord, the constant looking up to Jesus the Crucified, brotherly love—all this is missing. . . .

"God, You search me and know my thoughts. My whole heart and all my acts are known to You. There, where I am erring, where I do not think and act according to Your will, help me, for I am truly concerned about Your will. . . ."

c) Letters of Tobias Voth from Schoenwiese; According to a Pamphlet in his own Handwriting §323

"To the honorable gentleman, Pastor Rosenstrauch, in Kharkov. Schoenwiese, January 11, 1831.

"My esteemed and beloved Pastor! During the summer of 1829, when I was still residing in Ohrloff, I wrote you a short letter and sent it along with Mr. Carsten, who was buying cattle in the colony. . . . Now I am residing in Schoenwiese near Alexandrovsk. For a year and a half I have been planning a school for the surrounding area [which, as we have seen, apparently would not succeed; he talks about orphans]. . . . I do not wish to publicize my plan as yet, however; within me a voice is constantly saying: Do nothing without the counsel of others! Do you find my plan appropriate, or do you know of something that would be more appropriate? I would request that you tell me. I am deeply concerned about what I should do, and for this reason I am praying to God daily. I entreat you to join your prayer with mine, so that I may know the will of God. How gladly I would fulfill the same, since it does not require more than I can perform with His support. However, God does not speak directly through self-articulated words into our ear. We have to arrive at a conviction through an inner consciousness, or through the call of others, or through the counsel of a friend, etc., as to what we are to do.

"May my love for you and my confidence in you be the intercessors for the liberty of this writing. The Lord our Savior Jesus Christ bless you and him who is united to you, Tobias Voth."

"January 27, 1832. . . . On September 15 of last year I started a

school with fifteen children. Gradually more took part, so that the number now stands at thirty-four. [One cannot count on the continuation of the school: 'There is no appreciation for it '. . . .] To have children instructed in 'Christianity' and in the 'knowledge essential for farmers' is something the people readily accept. However, since parents themselves possess too little school-knowledge and are unable to see that an ignorant child cannot learn all that is necessary in half a year or a year, they lose heart and are dissatisfied that they are supposed to send their children to the village-school again this coming May. September 10. . . . [His school has ended. Two sons of Russian noblemen receive instruction as well as board and room; but even this cannot continue because of the meager payments. He experiences severe testings. . . .] In the midst of a prayer: 'Lord, lead me!' and then: 'No, you are leading yourself!' How miserable is the poor heart, when the sun is hid behind thunder-clouds.

"January 8, 1834. . . . My most honorable member of the Consistory! [The same P. Rosenstrauch.] Through the mail today I received your esteemed letter . . . and with a heart filled with gratitude towards God I gather that you are mindful of me and my family during this time of utmost stress. People are already paying forty rubles for a *tschetwert* (of rye). . . . Your loving friend, Tobias Voth.

"The 15th . . . [month and year torn off in manuscript] one hundred rubles (in bank checks) which a charitable lady, unknown to me, has given, I have actually received, and I am expressing to you my warm and hearty thanks. . . . We are living in a time, in which mankind is very calloused, very insensitive. . . . [From here on the pamphlet is destroyed. We have greatly abbreviated the letters.]"

d) We know nothing more about Voth by way of historical documents. What his students and admirers thought of him and what significance they ascribed to him, as well as his last days and his death, have been briefly described in sections 40-42 above. We recommend that these paragraphs be re-read. There we saw that for him death was the happiest moment in this world. The pathway of life of our first secondary school teachers, and of those who led the way to culture, was a thorny one. This is also evident from the following life-portrait of Heinrich Heese, Sr.

2. Heinrich Heese, Sr.

We have also discussed this educator in our book, and we refer especially to sections 41 and 53. Recently, Minister D. H. Epp has written about him in more detail in "Heinrich Heese and His Time" (*Botschafter*, 1910). It is to be hoped that this biography will soon appear in book form.

As is generally known, Heese became Tobias Voth's successor at the Ohrloff Society School and served there from 1829 to 1842. Cornies, the determining personality in educational matters at Ohrloff, selected Heese, as we know, because the latter had acquired competency in the theoretical knowledge of the Russian language, and was able to teach in it with good success. Not only that, but for the situation of that time he also spoke the language properly, and had a command of the Russian literary language (especially in the form and for the purpose of official communication). Oral practice he acquired in a very rational and effective manner in that he became a tutor in the homes of Russian nobles for longer periods of time. With good judgment, much courage, and with corresponding success, he utilized all possible opportunities for the acquisition of conversational Russian. Another reason, without doubt, why Cornies selected Heese was the fact that he saw in him the man who would teach with more "manliness," i.e., with greater discipline and authority than Voth. Heese's aggressive and very firm manner naturally must have been known to him, for his eyes quickly and surely penetrated a man's distinctiveness. Certainly Cornies was also informed about Heese's struggle with the Area Administrative Office in Chortitza, where he had displayed the same energetic character and progressive mind. It is also true that, for Cornies, T. Voth's religious manner had been somewhat too "pietistic" in its outward form. Although Cornies adhered to the same principles of faith as Voth, and appreciated and promoted missions, Bible society, etc., he was nevertheless much more the sober, somewhat dry "Mennonite," suspicious of the overt religious expressions, while Voth in his manner resembled more the "evangelical pietist." We concede that for us also there is somewhat too much sentimentality in Voth, whereas in Cornies, "manliness" all too often expressed itself as despotism, which Heese had later to experience as Voth before him. After all, Heese's kind of faith was also rooted in the warm-hearted, methodologically strongly emotional (in its extreme form, too sentimental) orthodoxy of that time which had begun, even then, to displace the cool, intellectual Protestant rationalism. The former is called the "new Pietism." We find Heese especially emotional in his earlier period in Ohrloff, the best period of his entire life. His views and his feelings of that time can be ascertained from the following letter addressed to J. Martens (frequently referred to above), later a minister of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt Church:

"Mr. Jakob Martens in Tiegenhagen. Ohrloff, December 11, 1832. Dearest Friend! Your painstaking efforts in the sale of the books from the local depository [see Readers' Society, *#40* above] have prompted me to send you a still larger quantity of these books—on commission—as follows: 100 of 'Return of the Lord' [we omit prices] 5 'The Heart of Man,' 10 'Passports.' You will forgive me my presumption in expecting

you to assume this responsibility. I trust in your generally-known goodness and kindness. I am only praying to my dear God that He might accompany these booklets with His blessing, and that many human hearts might be led to a living faith in His holy name. It is a blessedness already here on earth to be able to contribute something to the glory of God and the eternal salvation of our fellow-man. Never before has God revealed Himself in greater power and blessing on earth than in these days, and even though we may not live to see His return in His glory, we have been numbered among His own through faith in Him, a faith which is active through love. We shall grow daily in our love for Him and for all men, without exception; like the mustard seed that comes up out of the ground and grows into a tree, in which birds build their nests and are able to dwell in safety beneath it. Often in my lonely hours these sweet emotions take hold of me, when everything around me is resting from the burdens of the day, so that I bow down in His most holy invisible presence and worship at His feet. There I receive new courage, new strength, new life for His service in His vineyard. There I taste and feel the kindness of the Lord who called me into His service to lead to Him His lambs who do not know His name as yet. The happiest lot on earth has been given to me: to draw men towards the kingdom of God. How glorious, how comforting! How I shall rejoice at the eternal reunion with these loved ones in the kingdom of peace with Jesus our Lord. How happy I shall be then, when, without interference, freed from all physcial weakness, I shall serve the dear Lord in fellowship with the heavenly hosts, in perfect harmony and peace. This thought is often so real in my soul that I forget everything else around me and, at night, even fall peacefully asleep with it. Also, I sense that soon the hour of my departure to be with Christ will come—the Christ who purchased me with His holy blood, and whom my soul loves. [That moment did not come for a long time—more than thirty-five years—when he was permitted to fall asleep as an eighty-year-old—the rest of the letter is related to familiar matters. . . .] Finally, I wish you and your loved ones well. Enjoy the holy festival of the birth of Jesus in the true joy of the Lord. That is the wish of your true friend, Heinrich Heese."

From this letter one might conclude that Heese would enthusiastically have joined the Gnadenfeld and Pastor Wuest movement (*#43ff.* and *#74ff.*); after all, Gnadenfeld was settled during Heese's term of service in Ohrloff (1835-40). This was, however, not the case. Concerning Elder Friedrich W. Lange, whom he had met personally, he expressed himself in later years (between 1855-1860) in an angry, contemptuous letter in his olympian, unpolished style (his method when he wished to be critical). (In his training as a thinker, in his style, and otherwise,

especially as a didactic person, Lange was far superior to Heese.) In a private conversation, Lange had boldly expressed his personal assurance of salvation, which had greatly annoyed Heese (cf. the letter which follows). He was just as harsh in his judgment about Pastor Wuest, whom he knew only on a hear-say basis. All the shameful and absurd things which the foolish and anti-faith gossipers (cf. *#75,* d, P. Dobbert, above) were spreading about these two men and their movement, he accepted as firmly established and he believed firmly. The illustration for this he found in the unfortunate aberration of the "Kronsweide-Awakening" (*#127ff.*, above) where he saw only the aberrations. It would appear to us that when he wrote the copied letter he did not have an adequate knowledge of self and sin and, therefore, had not experienced the abundant forgiveness of sin.[6] When, in our enthusiasm, we mentally raise ourselves one degree higher in the spiritual sphere we always sink at least a degree and one half if we are not spiritually mature in our knowledge and emotions. It is also possible that Heese might have been disappointed by the discrepancy between word and being of many who boldly gloried in their forgiveness of sins and their assurance of salvation. Moreover, we also believe that God has not imparted to all His children the same kind, depth or breadth of spiritual insight and Christian experience, but that the limitation of knowledge and revelations has a varied distribution. Has not one and the same Gospel been written by four evangelists in different tonal expressions; do not Paul, Peter, John and James speak in their letters of the one faith, with formal variations in picture and expression? This may suffice. Heese, firm and immovable in his faith, later proved to be a rude opponent of the brotherhood (described by us as Pietism in Gnadenfeld, the one with Wuest, and especially of that of the Kronsweide group (*#127*) and of the "secessionists" of the sixties (*#83*). We shall let him speak for himself in a letter of January 1, 1857:

"Those of Gnadenfeld will soon run again into their own snares. . . . They were always barren [Wuest] in their wisdom, even before their namesake [Pastor 'Wuest'] was promoted in their vicinity. Fritz Lange . . . managed to bring such wisdom out of his agitated breast that one had to marvel: the depth of the deity, the sanctification through the Spirit, the righteousness in Christ—these he enumerated on his fingers. He was so perfect in his faith that the door to heaven had to be opened for him at a slight hint. When I, in response, countered that I could never get further with my justification than that bowed-down publican, he replied with a look of derision: 'Such a state of the soul is miserable; true faith must always be founded on a sure conviction.' The whole exchange shows a presumption."

About the "secessionists" or "brethren" he writes in his heroic way

(tolerating no appeal) to a friend on July 15, 1863. ". . . Turn away from the voice of Neufeld, he is led by an unclean spirit who has taught him to burn the holy books! [cf. *#145* above]. The pharisee Neufeld is inviting a terrible judgment upon himself because he presumptuously claims to be a leader of the people. . . . The proud pharisee, with his vaunted self-righteousness, proclaiming aloud his service for God, that is his man. . . ."

The objective side of Heese's criticism partly agrees with our feelings and judgment. The one-sided, passionate, partisanship, however, beclouds all the great and positive treasures which Gnadenfeld, Wuest, and the "Brethren" have brought to Russian Mennonitism. We need men who are able to detect and evaluate virtue in the opponent and vice in the brother. Among the persons actively involved in the sixties, there were none, with the exception of those from Ohrloff, on whom Heese therefore also pours out his severe reproach. On July 20, 1863, he writes to an "honorable friend" (it would appear from the content, to Elder Johann Harder):

"But that your teaching ministry through speculation strengthens those who are possessed by an unclean spirit [here a word seems to be omitted] in their insanity, that is terrible. That is an evil omen, and through this you will completely destroy these unbalanced ones. The lax Mennonite Church, to be sure, will not be shattered, but it will have to renew and bestir itself somewhat through these trials. . . ." [With the "possessed," etc., naturally the "Brethren" are meant.]

§325 Just as boundless and red-hot as his religious feelings and verdicts, was Heese's patriotism, which, in its genuine civil loyalty, its love for the fatherland and its gratitude inspires us. The exaggerations and extremely pathos-laden forms of expression appear to us, however, as the "excesses" which can be found in every original, self-taught, natural genius, especially when such a personality has been formed through hard struggles of life. We shall let Heese speak in his own words:

"Einlage, November 3, 1855. To Peter Isaak in Schoenau [Molotschna]. . . . In the enclosed poems you will discern my views about it [the Crimean War]. Herein I have faithfully followed the suggestions of the Spirit, according to which our pious Prince [the Russian Tsar] will, for the glory of God, have the final victory. Our enemies are despisers of Christ; they are slaves of the dragon. Our Prince is serving the Lord, his warriors are believers, God will intervene, and the prayers of the pious will finally have the victory. . . . In what ways . . . is Russia less advanced than those countries which boast of their civilization? With all its great liberties, the people in England are oppressed worse than cattle by the high aristocracy; the common people are neglected in education,

and justice is involved in shameless intrigues. In France everyone is welded to the chains of the dragon, and religion is an object of mockery. Now in Russia, on the contrary, the general welfare is growing constantly! How wise, and how righteous is its law! How it honors religion! How tolerant it is toward all denominations! . . . In Russia's wilderness the Lord will know how to protect the woman with the child against the persecution of the dragon." [Cf. the "Exodus-Church" *#258* above.] Thus Heese wrote during the Crimean War. After the war we read as follows: "March 28, 1856. To them that love God, all things work together for good. Russia is blessed by the Lord with a wise, pious royal family. God is its mighty fortress against all the wiles and power of the enemy of Christ. . . . God's hand of blessing was with all [Tsars] for the salvation of their loyal subjects. Our Great Lord and Tsar Nicholas I (now resting in God) diligently promoted the training of the military, and how the bravery of our armies in this murderous war has justified such wise precaution! Our enemies were very loud with their boasts and threats; the Russians responded with silence. But the French prisoners said: 'The Russians shoot well, and their artillery is superior.'"

From Heese's patriotic poems we present a few samples:

Christmas Song

2. Satan sends his hosts
   to destroy our land
   Eagerly they rob, burn, kill
   practice it with a strong hand.
   We are threatened by great trouble
   Tribulation, fear, anxiety, and death.

3. Hardly had into this
   world been born
   Our holy Jesus-child.
   [Parallel: Jesus-Russia; Herod-Napoleon]

8. Now Beelzebub drives with heat
   Unto the bloody battlefield
   And in its murderous vanguard
   Stands a real, crafty hero
   Again a Napoleon
   Fights for him with Babylon.

9. Now Satan has appeared,
   So that the whole world is shaking.
   Glories and majesties
   Are afraid of his might.
   Wooing now with flattery
   For the favor of the spirit of lies.

11. Only one Prince [Tsar Nicholas I] stands immovable
Firm in faith in the holy place [Russia]
Against him mightily embittered
are Beelzebub and Mohammed . . .

[In all, eighteen stanzas of six lines.]

New Year's Song

3. He ["the proud enemy"] was angered
and jealous of Russia's prosperity
He was spying with envy and bitterness
Waiting for the favorable moment
Nothing seems as important to him
As a betrayal to a bloody deed
To break Russia's greatness
To surely show his own shame.

4. The high counsel of Albion [7]
Raised to its zenith
The democrat Palmerston
Full of intrigue and conceit
Offered his hand, for a firm band
To the son,[8] thirsty for action
On France's bloody throne. . . .

6. The proud queen of Britain
Counseled by lies and deception
Seeks her earthly gain
In warlike deeds
She offers herself, with a flattering mind
To serve the spirit of lies
To mock Christianity.

8. Mohammed's son is also aroused
Through boasting and noise
To be inspired to action. . . .

9. But Russia's Tsar, in faithfulness
Faced by the dragon's waves
Has without fear and timidity
Drawn his brave sword. . . .

[In all, fourteen stanzas of eight lines.]

We can see here how Heese always sees only one side of things:[9] here perfection, ideal, holiness—there, Satan and hell. It is not the exaggerated pathos of his poetic patriotism that is interesting, but the fact that he, the born Prussian and Lutheran, and now Russian

Mennonite, carried over so completely the Prussian "Crusade-Patriotism" onto Russian soil. The Mennonite community which the author knew during his childhood took the same stance as Heese toward the Crimean War and toward the Russian soldier, as described so vividly and fervently by Alabin (in P.W. Kamensky—cf. #260ff. above). The Crimean War was regarded in a certain sense as a crusade (without knowing the word), in which the soldiers, especially the wounded and the sick among them, were viewed as martyrs. Doctrinal considerations concerning nonresistance hardly surfaced; emotions decided. Where do you see here Mr. Velizyn's German patriot in the Mennonite and colonist, who is casting treacherous side-long glances to Germany (see #260 above)? No, there were none; and not even his and his school's literary (and not only literary) propaganda has been able to produce such Mennonites and colonists. The exaggerated poetic expression of Heese's Russian patriotism of the Mennonites of Russia is gone. But the true essence of this devotion to the Russian fatherland, based on insight, sense of duty, gratitude, acculturation and deeper rootage in the soil which has been their home for over 100 years, has remained and become more self-conscious. Praise God! And from the Old Colony, the former sphere of influence of Heese, streamed the first and numerous voluntary medical orderlies (from the ranks of young Mennonites) to the field of battle in Manchuria. And in civic and congregational meetings their parents (with one stroke) pledged thousands of rubles for their support.

We have become acquainted with the religious and patriotic Heese; now let us look at Heese, the promoter of culture. This he was through and through. In his "Brief History," etc. mentioned above (#53) and in other documents he has left behind, he again and again speaks with enthusiasm for the promotion of agriculture, horticulture, sheep-raising, the growing of silkworms, and all possible branches of economic life in the Mennonite colonies. He is especially energetic in preaching diligence, while he cannot rebuke laziness (with which he strangely charges the former generation) too severely. The great promoter of a rational people's economy in the Mennonite colonies, Contenius, as a consequence was also Heese's greatly beloved and respected friend. Contenius, on the other hand, also greatly appreciated Heese and took him along in his carriage on his inspection trips through the colonies—Heese, the simple schoolmaster, to the amazement of some and the envy of many. According to Heese's view, every Mennonite should be a "model farmer" simply out of gratitude to Russia. (Cf. "Cornies," etc., and "Johann Claassen," above.)

As a pedagogue, Heese (the sharp, "manly" and self-made "schoolmaster") insisted on as much scholastic knowledge as possible, §326

on the pious modesty, and on industriousness and order, according to the Prussian model of his day, taking as his ideal (as well as he could remember) his own school teachers from his homeland, and an evangelical pastor as an ideal instructor in religion and as principal. Wide reading (as one may observe) also had an influence. We quote a few things from A.A. Neufeld's *Chortitza Centralschule*:

"He (Heese) had a high view of the school. He describes it as 'the only seed-bed for the development of a common attitude among youth,' etc. In keeping with the high significance of the school as a community institution, the building shall also reflect 'proportion, symmetry and good taste.' The school administration shall be free from all damaging prejudices, and shall have a proper view of the true purpose and general usefulness of the institution. It shall be motivated (in perfect unity) by the desire to promote unselfishly the welfare of the church for the present and the future. All concerns about the criticisms of short-sighted or even evil-minded people must be set completely aside. On the other hand, all well-meant recommendations should be received with pleasure and be carefully considered. . . . The improvement of nature also has an influence on the heart of man. A true image of God expresses itself before the world in that it rejoices in His works in creation; and that brings God's blessing. The young school teachers (this is Heese's designation of the trainees from the congregations who were later to become teachers) shall, with God's help, develop well through diligent effort in their lessons and in nature, and will be a blessing in the church. The school building must be constructed in good taste; its outward appearance should please everyone and also instill respect. The inner arrangement must be attractive, comfortable and friendly, in order to contribute to the wholesome preservation of a friendly spirit during the lessons." (In the seventies of the last century we considered these ideas as completely new achievements of a modern pedagogy! How little have these ideas of Heese been given consideration in the schools of the Mennonites of Russia!)

"Rules which Heese prepared in 1841 for the first trainees from the churches: First—the boys may not be under ten years of age; such who are already capable of developing their powers of comprehension. They must also have done some preparatory work in reading, writing and arithmetic. Secondly— they must be healthy, excellent in intellect, hearing, seeing, chest and lungs, for they shall grow up into capable schoolmen for the churches, and costs and efforts with them may not be wasted. A good predisposition towards singing also has great value for these boys. Thirdly—every boy is to be equipped with a Bible, arithmetic tables, writing slate, paper, ruler, lead-pencil, pen, penknife, inkwell, three candlesticks, three snuffers—in general, all necessary candles and a

pen-box for storing all instruments. A Russian grammar, paints and ink will be provided for him by the teacher. Fourthly— it would be very proper if all boys were dressed alike. Everyone should be provided with a dress-suit and six shirts for reasons of cleanliness. Fifthly—for patching up torn pieces of clothes and shirts the boys shall subsequently be trained, as well as for knitting their own woollen socks. For this the essential sewing and knitting kits, as well as other materials, will have to be acquired. . . ." (These were ideas and recommendations for the Chortitza Secondary School; see below.)

§327 The Story of Heese's Teaching and Suffering. One would be inclined to think that this man of iron, with the same cultural ideas as Cornies and Privy Councillor Hahn (cf. *#61, 68, 69,* etc. above), should have had steadfast friends in these two men. We are disappointed. In Ohrloff Heese lasted almost twice as long as Voth. His firm and "manly" nature satisfied Cornies for a long time. To this must be added Heese's knowledge of the Russian language and his relative success in teaching the same. The first and larger part of his time in Ohrloff must be regarded as the best and most enjoyable part of Heese's life—after a time of bitter struggle in the Old Colony. (See D.H. Epp in another place.) But even Heese's achievements finally did not satisfy Cornies. Heese taught up to sixty students at various age levels—up to the full adult level—in everything which was known to him and Cornies and which was recognized as "profitable for a Christian farmer." During the evenings (namely at night) Heese had to be the "voluntary" secretary of Cornies for his correspondence in the Russian language with the higher authorities, and for his numerous plans of reform! When Heese was unable to continue to work day and night like this, and hence also did not want to anymore, then Cornies, the man who was always able to accomplish what he attempted (except for the last half-year of his life; see D.H. Epp), also became dissatisfied with him. Heese expresses himself about him in writing (according to Epp) as follows: "With the recognition by the government, and with the increase of his wealth, the hardness of his heart also increased." Heese left; however, the administration of the Society School provided him with a good testimonial: he had served the school "with zeal and faithfulness," the "children acquired good skills, and by precept and practice he instilled in them the fear of God. He passed all his public examinations before the people with general applause." (According to A.A. Neufeld.) He became the founder[10] (1842) and first teacher of the Chortitza Secondary or District School (see below). Only after prolonged reluctance did he return to Chortitza, mindful of the many vexations he had experienced with the administration there during the time of his secretarial work. Already in

1846 he was replaced by Heinrich Franz, Sr., as the superior schoolman, just as he had replaced T. Voth for the same reason. His release came as a result of Cornies' influence through Privy Councillor Hahn in a manner which Heese believed to be a deception, and hence he felt deeply offended. From Chortitza he went to Einlage, where he acquired a small house in which a Swiss Mennonite, Hausknecht, had formerly conducted a private school. Here he gave tutorial instruction (or conducted school) until his ripe old age. Initially he taught the sons of Russian noblemen (who were also boarding with him) and the latter aided him greatly financially. He called them his "fat barons." Yet he was reported, and had to take an examination as a seventy-year-old man, which he passed; but from then on he was permitted to teach only "Germans." With strenuous effort and thriftiness he battled against adversity, and that successfully; now and then, old friends from the Molotschna, in love and grateful memory, gave him substantial sums and helped him out of his difficulties. From the people of Einlage, especially the youth of the village (who were not kept in check by local authorities), for years the old man had to suffer terrible chicanery which amounted to mistreatment. This only stopped when he finally registered his complaint at the Area Administrative Office. (Neufeld and Epp.) We believe it was the hatred of the mob[11] against the preacher of culture and decency. To Heese's biography we only add here that he was born in Prussia in 1787, and that he fled to Russia to escape recruitment by the French. The rest of what is significant we already know (#53, etc.)

§328 Heese's swan-song and farewell to the Mennonite churches of Russia. Aside from the gradual weakening of his physical strength, he remained the same in his ideals and in his concern for the general welfare right up to his old age. On December 9, 1867, eighty years old, he writes to a friend: ". . . My writing is coming to an end. . . . The joys of the world, the aspirations, the hopes are gone, to be sure, at my age. One only yearns yet for grace, and O! how blessed it is when one is able to pray in sleepless nights. For eighty years now I have been a pilgrim in 'Kedar;' during the day I have been oppressed by heat, at night I have been shivering in the cold. I have been beaten by Amalek, Belial has ensnared me—I would have succumbed if the Angel of the Covenant had not been my Redeemer. But He helped me out of trouble, His manna satisfied me, His rock gave me drink. He set me free from the power of Amalek and of Belial. He guided me happily right to the border of the heavenly Canaan, where I am now waiting for a gracious admission—with longing, with anxiety (and among other things), with fear—at which point one has to pray very much. If, however, the righteous One on the Cross had to cry out in His anxiety (prior to His

consummation), 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' how should I, the sinner, then want to enter into glory without suffering? He has given me the promise of His mercy. . . . The school teacher Franz [his successor in the secondary school] has left a good foundation in Chortitza; his successor [the subsequent church elder Heinrich Epp], a meek disciple of Jesus, is building upon it with good results. However, all of this is not enough. Two such splendid Mennonite Churches [the Chortitza and Molotschna Colonies] should definitely be able to establish one common teacher-training institute. For this purpose three or four young men should be educated for the firm establishment of order and the church. Our Lord Jesus soon chose—in addition to the beloved laymen, His disciples—also the educated Saul for His church on earth. [Mennonites of Russia, listen, listen to what the dying old man said already forty-three years ago!] Then He also called wise men and scribes, and with these His warriors He overcame all might of the Gentiles. . . ."[12]

With this swan-song we conclude the life-portrait of this man who reminds one of the oaks of Einlage amidst the granite rocks. Even with his aberrations and peculiarities he was, nevertheless, a "scribe and a wiseman" sent by God to our corporate body. He died on April 12, 1868, some four months after writing the letter quoted. His ashes rest in the cemetery of Einlage. His will and testament has not yet been fully realized; and now it appears that "the night comes, when no one can work."

3. Heinrich Franz, Sr. §329

We also already know Heinrich Franz somewhat as educator and Christian from ##43ff., #62, c. #82(2)b, etc. We have no handwritten material from him personally. We present the biographical sketches about him which have been graciously submitted to us by one of his eminent students, the well-known former missionary and now elder of many years, Heinrich Dirks. These sketches will be enlarged somewhat according to our own knowledge.

Heinrich Franz, Sr., was born on October 6, 1812,[13] in (Hest?) West Prussia. After elementary school in his home community, he attended the Society School at Rodloffer Hufen near Marienburg for three years under the competent teaching of Friedrich W. Lange (subsequently elder of Gnadenfeld) who had formerly been a teacher of city-schools in Graudenz. On May 15, 1828, at the age of fifteen, he was baptized in Schoensee near Kulm in West Prussia. After his educational preparation he was first a tutor in his home community; later, in a private school in the Werder near Marienburg. After that he became teacher of the

Brenkenhofswalde School near Driesen (see *#44*, etc. above). After his emigration to Russia he was, for a short time, a private teacher at Felsental; then he served for a number of years, 1835-1844,[14] in the village school at Gnadenfeld. From 1844 to 1846 he was superintendent of the boarding home of the Ekaterinoslav advanced secondary school for the purpose of acquiring the Russian language. From 1846 to 1858 he was, as already mentioned, teacher of the Chortitza Secondary School as a successor of H. Heese. After leaving Chortitza, he was, for a few years, teacher of the private school in Gnadenfeld (discussed by us as "Brethren School," *#52*) and then in another school in the same place—described by our reporter as a "Society-School." (Was it not one and the same school which was at first housed in provisional premises, but later in the present building of the secondary school?—*#52*) After this he again taught in a different private school in Gnadenfeld, and finally he was teacher for a number of years in the school of the estate owner Jakob Dick of Rosenhof at Brodsky. He retired in 1880, and permanently settled in Neu-Halbstadt, where in the fall of the same year he celebrated his fiftieth jubilee as teacher in his own newly-occupied home (the present teachers' residence of the girls' school in Halbstadt). Here in Neu-Halbstadt he still taught religion for a few years in the girls' school which was then being established. He also collected and edited the poems of the late minister Bernhard Harder, who had died in 1884. (These were published by him and [printed] by J.F. Richter of Hamburg in 1888.) H. Franz died of a heart attack on May 26, 1889, in the seventy-seventh year of his life, on the steps of the girls' school of Neu-Halbstadt. Although he was not a teacher there anymore, as an always-interested educator he was hurrying to attend the school examination. How typical!

We further give some important information about Franz from the brochure of A. A. Neufeld already cited previously: *Die Chortitza Centralschule*.

"The successor of Heinrich Heese [at the Chortitza Secondary School] was Heinrich Franz. Already at the close of 1845 Privy Councillor Hahn had recommended him as teacher for the secondary school—'as a young man who, during the next vacation, will be graduating from a two-year course in the Russian language in Ekaterinoslav,' where he had been superintendent in the boarding school for the nobility at the advanced secondary school. He is, as we have been informed, of good character and has a great love for the teaching profession. Franz had passed his teacher's examination in Prussia in 1832. . . . In 1834 he received a certificate stating that he was well-qualified for teaching, that he possessed knowledge and methodological skill, and that he had performed excellently in his

profession, because he had a deep-rooted, warm love for the teaching profession. Emigrated to Russia [as we already know]. . . . That he took the course in the Russian language in Ekaterinoslav [in the interim between his service as village school teacher in Gnadenfeld and secondary school teacher in Chortitza] shows—we have also observed this in Heese—his great energy and also his deep understanding of the needs of the colonists. Franz never really acquired an adequate command of the Russian language, especially in practical terms. It would appear that he also never was wholeheartedly devoted to it, and that it was more difficult for him than for Heese to learn to feel in Russian. Heese, in his day, had composed long poems [see above] in which in a very patriotic spirit he presented Russia's history, especially the battles against foreign powers. These would hardly have been according to Franz's taste. The instruction of the Russian language was also emphasized less by Franz than by Heese, and the latter is supposed to have stressed with satisfaction that he might be inferior to Franz in all respects, except in Russian. German writing and arithmetic [along with elementary algebra and geometry] may have been given preference by Franz. Heese, whose relationship to his successor was not the best, says that the latter was childishly in love with his artificial style. Concerning instruction in arithmetic, all living students of Franz remember it vividly; it was also decisive with regard to the student's sympathy or antipathy towards the teacher; for during these lessons, primarily, Franz revealed himself as he was: in his complete dedication to teaching, but also in that he became easily and intensely excited, etc. One thing is clear: from 1846 to 1858, the Chortitza Secondary School had in Franz an extremely competent teacher for that day. His enemies confirm this. This is also confirmed—in spite of his draconian severity (which must not be measured against present-day demands, but which must be explained in terms of the views of the people of that time) and in spite of the mass of anecdotes, partly funny and partly cruel in background, as told by them from their school life—by most students of Franz. [Even the later ' Brethren ' from the ranks of his students, Gerhard Wieler, Johann Wieler and others—were, in spite of the severe religious tension, always proud to have been 'students of teacher Franz.'] The administration also recognized his achievements as being exceptional, and the Ministry of Crown Lands awarded him [upon recommendation of the committee] a certificate of Honor for long, conscientious and faithful service in 1852. Like Heese, Franz did not restrict his activities to actual instruction either, even though his interests were not as diverse. Thus he had already prepared constitutions for the community schools of Chortitza in 1846. In 1851, with his assistance, directives for the educational system were prepared—something required, and indeed, for that time, indispensable for instruction in matters of the internal administration of

the settlers in South Russia at that time and later. Franz also had many friends and disciples in the congregations, so that Heese, for instance (1862), writes: 'Believing in God only, not in Franz; he is a capable teacher in his lessons—but his egoism, which he also instills in his pupils—what poison!?' Initially, Franz was also on good terms with leading circles and men; but suddenly this changed. Franz was as much to blame for this as his opponents, since, in the final analysis, the cause was to be found in his cruel punishments, which occasionally also involved the child of a powerful person. In all probability, however, there were matters of a purely personal nature which forced him in 1858 to give up his position. He was a difficult character who found it impossible to humble himself or always to adapt to conditions. . . ." (Thus far Neufeld.)

A violent polemic between Franz and the Area Administrative Office brought his services to an end. After a twelve-year ministry he parted from the Chortitza School "deeply hurt." It should also be mentioned about Franz that his "One Hundred and Fifty Arithmetic Tables" (a systematization of the entire arithmetical instruction through problems, with a pamphlet of solutions) have dominated the schools of the Mennonites of Russia for approximately half a century. His *Chorale-book* in ciphers has transformed the spiritual singing of Russian Mennonites (cf. #53, H. Heese! above), and even today essentially dominates it.

Franz's education consisted of an extraordinary, generous measure of higher elementary school knowledge: firmly, surely and without wavering he would re-capitulate on occasion, if the need was there, matters from every part of the designated area. His language was an elegant, grammatically correct High German of the educated classes in Prussia; pedantically restricted, however, to boundaries that could not be crossed: thus, and not otherwise! He was the ideal of an elementary school teacher as desired by the Prussian school directives of that day, and as expressed in the "Regulations." A higher, academic education for our people, however, he did not desire—unless it were purely religious or directly practical. His personality was imposing; the impression at a first meeting with him was almost stately. The stamp of genius was clearly visible. (For more about Franz, see "Chortitza Secondary School.")

§330

4. The Significance of T. Voth, H. Heese and H. Franz for Mennonitism in Russia

These three men have put their mark on the Russian-Mennonite school, and for the teaching staff they have left an indelible ideal: piety, Russian patriotism and the diligent and thorough acquisition of

knowledge, with special emphasis on that which is practically applicable. The endowment of the teacher, the method of instruction and the currents of the time may change. No teacher, however, who deviates from these ideals will earn, much less retain, the respect and love of society. Many things will be forgiven him, only not a marked deficiency in the striving for these goals. If tradition has ascribed to Voth primarily a reputation for piety, to Heese Russian patriotism and to Franz a great thoroughness and a great success in the impartation of knowledge—the three have together produced this three-fold ideal (without their having stood together in a personal and intimate relationship). Each one of them was immovably firm to the end in his love for work, and in his faithfulness to duty and principle. All three were truly and earnestly pious, and differed only more or less in their understanding, in their temperament and in character—whether more inward or more practical. They are no less worthy of grateful memory, of enthusiastic respect and imitation than the two men whom we have described as our greatest: Johann Cornies and Bernhard Harder. If we today acquire a considerably higher education with relative ease, and know better didactic and pedagogical methods—this does not make up for the genial depth and strength of those others. In the five men mentioned here we have five proposals for as many popular belletristic life-portraits for the inspiration of our youth and the instruction of our people—life-portraits without the prosaic, critical objectivity that binds the "historian," but not the "story-writer." The latter is only bound to idealize truth, and may present realities in a poetic and idealistic garb. For our own more restricted world, such life-portraits in the form of short stories would be no less valuable, profitable and popular, than the products of Jeremias Gotthelf (Albert Bitzius) Polack's "Brosamen" and the works of Otto Funke and the like[15] are for the larger circles.

We are indebted to a certain degree to the first three secondary school teachers discussed here for a proper public and religious education, even though a consistently satisfactory, pedagogically trained teaching staff, as well as a theologically trained clergy and a special "educated class," are still lacking.

Now that we have become acquainted with the most prominent fathers of our educational system, we proceed to the schools themselves. We shall first describe the secondary schools.

B. *Secondary Schools*

I. The Ohrloff Secondary School, formerly known as "Society-School"; and its Teachers Until 1910

a) We know this school well enough in its first period since we have §331

learned to know more closely its first two teachers[16] and its main founder and promoter, Johann Cornies. For this first period from 1822 to 1847 a third teacher must be mentioned—Martin Riediger, son-in-law of Heinrich Heese. Of him we know only that he was famous for his knowledge of the Russian language, and that around 1860 he made a trip, previously mentioned, to the Amur with the well-known Bernhard Warkentin (Altenau-Terpenie) in order to find out whether the area was suitable for a Mennonite settlement. (As is generally known, the result was negative.) In 1847 the school building burned down, in 1848 Cornies died, and the work of education lay dormant for thirteen years.

§332 b) The Second Period from 1860 to 1910. A circle of school friends again set to work energetically and established a new school society which received government recognition. This also applied to the newly-opened Society School (later Secondary School) which had the right to train teachers for the schools of Mennonites (cf. #52 b, above). On September 12, 1860, this institution was formally opened in the building (later enlarged) in which it has continued to the present. (Cf. brochure: *Fiftieth Jubilee of the Ohrloff Society School, 1860-1910*, etc.)

1) Hermann August Janzen of Tiege was the teacher from 1860 to 1867(9?). We know little about his training (in all probability a Halbstadt district-student and church-trainee), except that for a number of years he studied and worked in Odessa as a surveyor-apprentice and assistant of the Supervisory Commission, so that throughout his life he remained a famous surveyor. As a result of this position, and probably because of special linguistic ability, he had acquired a solid knowledge of the Russian language. In what spirit Hermann Janzen entered upon his teaching career can be observed from his prayer prior to his address at the opening festival of the school. (See cited brochure of festival):

"Dear Savior, good Shepherd of Your dearly-purchased flock! You have called me as teacher of these Your children, and You have entrusted their souls unto me. O let Your light and Your truth always shine brightly for me. Let Your love warm my heart, and let Your power be mighty in me! I am a vessel in Your hand, mold me into a fit instrument of Your will! May only Your wisdom teach me, and keep me from the artificiality of lofty words. O Lord! Let these young plants grow for the joy of their parents and prosper for Your everlasting kingdom! Endue me with wisdom and strength, with love, meekness and patience! Amen." In his address he quotes the lines from Gellert: "O God, how great must be the joy, to be the rescuer of one soul!"

Elder Johann Harder, in his discourse, defines the "meaning and principles" of the school (among other things) as follows:

". . . That . . . through this school efforts be made not only to impart earthly knowledge (which, though somewhat useful, is of little profit, according to the statement of the Apostle), but much more and above all, true godliness, which is profitable for all things . . . and that this school become a seedbed for the knowledge and true worship of God, and that it might contribute to the kindling and spreading of that holy fire, concerning which the Savior wished, with great yearning, that it were already kindled! . . . O that the Lord would only give us teachers at all times who, as poor, pardoned sinners, out of personal experience and through personal example, might in this way be proper models for their little flock, so that the fruit of their labors might be a rich blessing for our children and children's children. . . ."

Minister Franz Isaak (frequently mentioned earlier in this book) addresses the festive gathering as follows: ". . . let no one change your goal" and then refers to point four of the constitution of the School Society which says: "The goal which this Society School shall try to attain is not only to instruct prospective students as thoroughly as possible for this present life, but also, and primarily, to train them for their eternal destiny. . . ."

We see here that it is the spirit of Tobias Voth which is renewing the school. The exaggerated Mennonite fear about the "too much" of learned knowledge also finds vivid expression! Elder Harder expresses himself: ". . . Woe unto those educational institutions and school teachers who in their efforts do not only restrict themselves solely to the knowledge and sciences of this world, but attempt to give to this knowledge and these sciences a direction which brings them into contradiction with the Word of God. . . ." The same concern is also expressed by Franz Isaak.

About Hermann Janzen's school it should also be said that, besides general serious study, it very enthusiastically promoted poetry (in the learning and reciting of selected poems), singing, penmanship and drawing. Teachers and almost all students often made music privately, especially cultivating the guitar and the flute, largely for the purpose of accompaniment of religious (private) singing. Janzen himself was endowed with a very artistic nature, and was a man of great friendliness and winsome personality. As a result of poor health he retired from the school after a ministry of seven (or eight?) years. Then he was, for a time, secretary at the Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt where, at that time, important reform efforts were taking place. After that, he was teacher for a number of years on "Schroeder's Taschtschenak" in the District of Melitopol. He spent his sunset years as an invalid at Memrik.

2) Hermann Janzen's successor was Isaak Isaak [17] Fast of

Gnadenfeld, a student of Heinrich Franz in Gnadenfeld. He had been teacher for several years on an estate and in the elementary school of Neu-Halbstadt, a man of the same precise working habits as Franz (but not quite as strict). He was teacher at the Ohrloff School from 1868 to 1873. After that he served for a few years as semstvo-teacher with the Wuerttembergers close to Berdiansk; later at the Kuban (see #247 above).

3) As teacher of Russian language, history and Russian geography, the district-teacher Yury Ossipovitsch Krassovsky (1872-75) (former student of Moscow University) was appointed to serve with Isaak Fast.

§333 4) From August, 1873, until May, 1905 (thus for thirty-two school years), Kornelius Benjamin Unruh served at this school. At first he served as the main teacher for religion, German language and all science subjects, which at that time were still all taught in German. He taught with Krassovsky until 1875, and after that he worked with J. J. Braeul (see below) as his colleague in Russian and several other subjects. From 1877 unto the end Unruh, as principal of the school, taught (in this team of three) religion and German language exclusively.

Kornelius Unruh was born in 1849 in the Molotschna village of Waldheim. His grandfather had been preacher in the Mennonite Church of Brenkenhofswalde and in Poland (see #43 above), a man of very significant theological and linguistic training. His father was a modest farmer with a strong and keen intellect; several years ago he died in his eighties in the Crimea. His mother, whose maiden name was Sperling, was a woman of deep inwardness and warmth. In his origin, Kornelius Unruh also belonged to the Old-Flemish, or, those of Groningen.

As a ten or eleven-year-old he became a pupil and church-trainee (scholarship holder) of the Halbstadt Secondary School (see below) during the term of teacher Gustav Rempel and studied here for six years. With unusual scholastic skills (partly acquired through self-help and reading[18]), he entered the public school teaching profession—barely seventeen years old. In 1866, the year he left school, he was genuinely converted, whereby Minister Bernhard Harder, who at that time was school teacher in (Old) Halbstadt, served as his pastor and counsellor. At Pentecost he was baptized upon a conscious, living faith by Elder Duerk Warkentin in Petershagen. For one (or two?) years he was teacher on an estate in the District of Melitopol; after that, for a few years in the village-school at Blumenort, Molotschna. Altogether he served as public school teacher for (about) five years. All the while he worked with unlimited energy and with pleasure to further his education. During the summer vacation he often spent months in the cities of Ekaterinoslav, Kiev, Odessa, etc., pursuing with great enthusiasm the study of the Russian language and of pedagogy with the assistance of prominent

Russian specialists. He acquired an amazing degree of competence in the Russian language, and introduced it into the village-school of Blumenort in a scope and manner unknown until that time: namely, according to the method designed for national Russians by the famous leader in pedagogy, Uschinsky. He used the latter's *Rodnoie Sslovo* (The People's Word) and *Dietsky Mir* (Children's World), but also the grammar, as needed by Germans, for the study of Russian. He was also engaged in translations. To the amazement of everyone, the children not only learned to read, write and translate, but also to speak Russian and to tell what they had read! Upon his request, a second teacher was appointed (the man who for many years was secretary of the Ohrloff-Zagradovka Volost, Bernhard Peter Fast). The school of Blumenort had a very positive influence on many teachers and village assemblies. In August, 1870, Unruh became teacher of the Halbstadt Secondary School (the origins of which will be described below). Here, one must say, he labored in an incredible manner and swept everyone along. In addition to twelve-year-old children, his "upper class" was attended (there were already at that time—what a miracle it was—two teachers and two classes in this school) by older fellows: P.M. Friesen, Unruh's school friend and senior by several months; Cornelius Jakob Reimer (see below, girls' school of Gnadenfeld) almost as old; Johann J. Braeul, Unruh's later colleague of many years (mentioned earlier) and other sixteen and seventeen-year-olds. After one year of enormous labors (when it seemed—at least for a moment—that he would suffer permanent damage in his capacity to work) Unruh left, going to Switzerland and to Moscow for three years to complete his education. H.H. Reimer, the principal of the Ohrloff Society School, lent him the money for this purpose. (Unruh made it possible that P.M. Friesen could go with him through funds provided by the Mennonite school board of the Molotschna.) In Switzerland he was an auditor in the private evangelical seminary at Muristalden near Bern (which Johann J. Wieler had attended before him and recommended to him) and at the university. Upon the recommendation of the seminary administration (which, on the basis of his previous training, had strongly urged that he attend the university), he visited all kinds of schools and training institutions—from the nursery and the "Kindergarten" to the more advanced, in order to become acquainted with their systems and methods. Finally, at the end of the year, during examination time, he spent several weeks at the State Seminary[19] of the canton of Bern in Muenchenbuchse, where at that time Ruegg, the famous pedagogue, was director, and the equally-famous "Reformed theologian" Pastor Langhans was the leading teacher of religion. (Both were also professors at the university.) Moreover, all possible scientific and religious societies and lectures had to be taken in. The gentlemen from the seminary seemingly could not do

enough to provide the "Russians" (who were still popular in Switzerland at that time; i.e., the Russians in general, which certainly is not true today) with an adequate intellectual diet, and they considered them fully capable of appropriating it. Here, too, Unruh drove himself so excessively in his studies that his learned advisers feared the worst for his health, and hence they earnestly warned him. But this strong man merely shook himself, as formerly in Halbstadt, and continued as before. The closing days of this period of study in Switzerland he spent—again upon the advice of his friends in Bern [20]—in a linguistic institute in French Switzerland, where he achieved extraordinary progress in the French language. Through circumstances, unfortunately, the projected study period was shortened somewhat. After his return, Unruh became seriously ill, suffering from a nervous fever. He recovered, however. (After this illness he began to suffer from a terrible obesity which became the plague of his life and which already in his early years burdened him with a weight of 432 pounds, [21] (!) which never went below 396 pounds until his death. However, it could never slow down, the scope and tempo of his work.) In the following winter he was in Moscow where his former students, P.M. Friesen and J.J. Braeul, had already studied for some time prior to his coming. All schools of Moscow were closed to the three Mennonites (who were struggling to attain a more perfect knowledge of the Russian language) because they had no credentials which would be valid in Russia. (How different it had been in Switzerland! There all schools had been open to them without testimonials or examinations—even the highest as auditors or auscultators—especially since "candidates of pedagogy" were given a very friendly welcome at that time.) Thus being together as a trio was of special value. There were oral practices with educated acquaintances and the entire community, private instruction from educated native Russians, reading and endless discussions and debates about it. There were also many written essays, and (as far as time, money and principles would permit) also literary and musical performances. The association in a common aspiration, with mutual criticism and control, and with such a pedagogue as the third in the covenant, produced for them a kind of academic atmosphere. The Russian language became, to a marked degree, the natural standard in their sense of language, and in the use of ear, tongue and pen. On August 20, 1873, Unruh became, as already mentioned, the main teacher in Ohrloff (after he had celebrated his wedding on August 12 with Miss Maria Epp of Blumenort). From then on for about twenty years he was, so to say, the stimulating pedagogical leader among the Mennonites of the Molotschna. This was especially so because of his having been for several years a practice teacher in the village-school of Switzerland, which at that time was

agitated by pedagogical storm and stress. Here he had absorbed like a sponge all that was so richly offered in the field of pedagogy—with the full understanding of a mature man. The association with the village-school teachers he continued as before in a collegial manner. In spite of the request and urging of P.M. Friesen (at that time teacher and later principal of the Halbstadt Secondary School), and of others, Unruh did not go to Halbstadt, where in 1878 a two-year pedagogical course was established (see below) and Ohrloff did not release him. This was one of the many particular sins of our Russian Mennonitism. Unruh had studied with "Ohrloff money"; how could he be relinquished to Halbstadt! And yet Ohrloff had (as well as Gnadenfeld and Chortitza! see below) petitioned initially with Halbstadt for a two-year course in pedagogy in order that the aspirants to the teaching profession from the ranks of their graduates might further their pedagogical training. Unruh's self-imposed limitation, whenever the general welfare was concerned, had contributed much to achieve this. He gladly stayed in Ohrloff, however, and was somewhat pleased with himself as the complete master of his simple, solid and model three-class secondary school—in the cozy Ohrloff-Tiege-Blumenort district. Jokingly Unruh used to say that it was more pleasant to criticize the central pedagogues than to be in that position and be criticized! We have always been convinced that the wider waters would have been good for his ship, and that his place was too restricted for his tremendous energy and his versatile knowledge. He created "room of movement" for himself as preacher (he was called as such by the Ohrloff congregation in 1883), and later as ecclesiastical politician, where not everything that happened was wise, holy and wholesome—as he himself admitted later. Private instruction for the purpose of preparing young people that wished to attend seminaries for ministers, go into foreign missions, or to write examinations to qualify as teachers of religion or German, all provided opportunity to employ his energy. Thus he worked more widely and deeply theologically than the demands of his own school required. Soon he also began to write textbooks: German grammar, readers, biblical history, introduction to the Bible and church history. This was usually done together with colleagues: P.M. Riediger, Wilhelm P. Neufeld, Kornelius Abram Wiens, Peter Franz Dick and Karl Wilhelm. Gradually his instruction in his school became somewhat less stimulating, and the educational significance and popularity was shared partly by his colleagues who had served for the longest time with him at the Ohrloff School. His theological (private) students, and especially all his students in Zagradovka (see below) have always worked with him and talked about him with enthusiasm.

In the fall of 1874 in Odessa Unruh had passed the "private tutor's

examination" [22] for German—naturally with flying colors, for the examination was a small thing for him.

In the late summer of 1898 Unruh celebrated the twenty-fifth jubilee of his teaching ministry at the Ohrloff School, and also his silver wedding. This was done with many kind and practical evidences of love and appreciation on the part of the School Society, his colleagues and former students. Seven years later, in 1905, after thirty-two years of service at the Ohrloff School, he left the school under embarrassing circumstances—*de jure* voluntarily. It was related to questions of discipline, where family and school had come into collision. Perhaps judgment was too harsh, and his significant merits were not adequately appraised. In a kind manner, Unruh has spared the author from giving him the details; he was satisfied with the latter's heartfelt, painful sympathy. For the fifty-six-year-old man, so deeply rooted in the society and educational soil of the Molotschna Mennonites, especially that of Ohrloff, it was a great and tragic[23] act to move into the Baptist colony Neufeld, in the District of Kherson, near the station of Novo-Poltavka. There he founded and consolidated a secondary school for the church. Things were going well, but he and his wife were too strongly "Mennonite" in their habits and customs. After two years he moved to the Mennonite settlement Zagradovka (Ohrloff Volost, Kherson District) where he started (in keeping with his inmost being and calling) a "Bible school" or theological preparatory school. In the village of Friedensfeld in this settlement he built for himself an attractive residence and an equally attractive school building with two well-lighted and well-ventilated classrooms. A small number of young men and young women sat at his feet here as enthusiastic disciples. The formal accreditation of his school on the part of the authorities took some time and was "in close prospect" shortly before his death! During the last year of his life, the school year 1909-1910, he was (responding to the urgent request of the colonial assembly of Ohrloff-Zagradovka) teacher for religion and German in the Ohrloff-Zagradovka Secondary School—under circumstances that were indescribably difficult for him.

The last five years of Unruh's life, and especially the very last, constituted a time of purification of his spiritual person. He was in a holy, red-hot crucible, according to his own words, conceding that "God was just" in His providential leadings. Outwardly he was working in his old manner without rest or respite; inwardly he examined and judged himself. Thus his character became more and more meek, mild, peaceable, friendly, and the community was unanimous in its expression of only love and appreciation.

Unruh's theology, after a period of wavering and doubt in the years

before, during and after his Swiss studies, had long since been anchored in the "soil of Calvary." Firmly and immovably he believed and taught the way of salvation in Jesus, the God-man and Redeemer. Sanctification of life was his yearning and pursuit.

Until three weeks before his death he continued to give private lessons in his usual manner—already sitting or lying on his bed. "After three weeks" when his moving from the residence of the secondary school into his own home would be over, instruction was to be resumed again. His obesity (his weight had gone down only to 396 lbs.) was no doubt a contributing factor to his relatively early death, without quenching his high spirits or his joy in his work. "These 396 pounds—they are gradually choking me," he said to the author two months before his death—with his hand covering his suffering heart.[24] On August 17, 1910, finally and in his last will, he arranged his business and literary concerns with his oldest son, attorney K.K. Unruh of Ekaterinoslav, and with his nephew and former student, Benjamin Unruh, lic. theol., of Halbstadt. He had worked without interruption on his literary works until that day.

At six o'clock in the evening, son and nephew took their leave of him. At twelve midnight Unruh died of a heart attack without any change in position. The last things people had heard from him were prayers and expressions of gratitude before his God, among them also the words of submission towards God: "Even if He desires to lead me still deeper!" He had reached the age of slightly over sixty-one years. We believe that after Tobias Voth, Heinrich Heese and Heinrich Franz, none of our teachers had attained a greater significance than Unruh. With regard to this, we refer also to the fiftieth jubilee of the Ohrloff Secondary School.

5) Johann Johann Braeul, son of the long-time Molotschna village school teacher Johann Braeul (deceased) in Ohrloff. After a very good preparation under his father he became, as already mentioned above, a student at the Halbstadt Secondary School during Unruh's time. In 1872-73 he was with Unruh and P.M. Friesen in Moscow, and in 1873-74 he studied in the Moscow fashion in Odessa where, in the spring of 1874, he passed the city examinations for elementary school teachers as the first one from the Molotschna. In 1874-75 he served as semstvo-teacher in the two-classroom village-school of Ohrloff. In August, 1875, he became (as stated above) Unruh's colleague essentially in the capacity as teacher of the Russian language. He is still working in this capacity with a never-ceasing strength and vigor. Since Unruh's departure he has been principal of the school. In 1884 Braeul passed the examination as district teacher[25] for Russian language, with history and geography as majors or subjects of instruction.

6) Abraham Peter Isaak, graduate of the Ohrloff School and in possession of the diploma for city elementary teachers, was appointed as third teacher in 1877 alongside Unruh and Braeul. This resulted in making it a three-classroom school (something which the Halbstadt School had become in 1875) and it has remained so to this day. In 1878-79 Isaak was teacher at the Halbstadt Secondary School. From 1879 to 1883 he was back in Ohrloff, and from then to the present he has been elementary teacher.

7) For one year, 1878-79, Peter Heinrich Heese, nephew of H. Heese, Sr., taught at this school. He graduated from the Chortitza Secondary School during the time of Heinrich Epp's teaching ministry there (see below). He entered the Ekaterinoslav advanced secondary school and after completing the eighth year, he studied at the technical university in Moscow. Before his teaching career in Ohrloff, he was teacher for one year at the Gnadenfeld Secondary School (see below). We shall learn to know him more closely in the section entitled "School Board."

8) Peter Abram Ediger (1883-1886) became Heese's successor. He graduated from the Halbstadt Secondary School, under Heinrich Franz, Jr., and P.M. Friesen, and after that, from the advanced secondary school in Berdiansk; district teacher for mathematics. After Ohrloff, Ediger was teacher of the Russian language for ten years at the Halbstadt Secondary School where he also succeeded Friesen as principal. After that, he became a businessman, and for about ten years he served as president of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board.

9) Peter Johann Wiens, a graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School under Hermann Lenzmann, took Ediger's position as teacher of mathematics. As an "external student" he passed the university entrance examination; he studied mathematics at the University of Kharkov and then at the University of Dorpat (Iuriev), where he graduated. Wiens taught in Ohrloff for three years; after that he returned to private life because of illness. Since August, 1909, he has been director of the Mennonite Business School in Halbstadt (see below).

10) Johann Heinrich Janzen has been teacher of mathematics, etc., at this school since 1889. He completed his studies at the Gnadenfeld Secondary School, the pedagogical course at the Halbstadt Secondary School, and at the institute for city school teachers at Feodosia. For several years Janzen has been minister (formally) of the Gnadenfeld congregation.

11) In 1905, Solomon Solomon Ediger became Unruh's successor as teacher of religion and German. He was a graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School and of the Evangelical School for Ministers in Basel; private tutor for German, and minister of the Gnadenfeld congregation.

c) The Principals[26] of this School in the Second Period of its Existence (always two at the same time): §334

1) Philipp Wiebe (at one time chairman of the society; after that, chairman of the Molotschna School Board, 1860-70.

2) Johann Cornies, Jr. (son of the well-known Johann Cornies) 1860-80.

3) Heinrich Heinrich Reimer—1870-80.

4) Johann Karl Klatt—1880-1900.

5) Franz Dyck[27] 1880; died before his one-year term of service expired.

6) Peter Heinrich Heese (named above)—1880-1900.

7) Heinrich Dietrich Guenther—since 1900.

8) Johann Johann Cornies III (son of the above)—since 1900.

d) Fiftieth Jubilee. §335

On June 1, the school celebrated the fiftieth jubilee of its existence since its second beginning. It should be noted that the institution has, except for a few disturbances, enjoyed a remarkable, harmonious cooperation within the society, within the administration, and especially within the teaching staff.

Of the 1200 students who had attended the school, 480 former students were present at the festival (not including those currently enrolled). The former students who had come to the festival belonged to all possible classes with regard to profession, possessions, and education. Farmers—from small landholders to estate owners, craftsmen, industrialists, merchants, church-leaders, semstvo-officials, minister and elders, "laymen," school teacher, ministers, seminary-theologians, one licentiate of theology, village-school, secondary school, and high school teachers, directors of secondary schools, doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc. all had been former students of this institution.

e) The Ohrloff School-Society is the first school assembly among the Mennonites of Russia which has created an old age pension plan[28] for its teachers. After thirty years of service, the teacher receives a one-time payment of somewhat over 11,000 rubles; smaller sums, respectively, after six years of service: from six to ten years—about 900 rubles, and after twenty years—over 4,000 rubles, etc. To this fund the teachers contribute five per cent of their salary, beginning with their sixth year of employment; the Society contributes the rest. The salary starts with 800 rubles (in addition, free residence and heating are provided) and levels off at 1,200 rubles, beginning with the sixteenth year. For administration, supervision of the library, etc., extra payments have been designated.

This salary and care arrangement has been in effect for three years. May this corporation also in this area be a stimulating example for others!

After all that has been said about the value of the Society and the School, it is unnecessary to make any concluding observations! This institution has given direction not only among the Mennonites of Russia, but also among the Mennonites of Russian background in North America.

§336

II. The Halbstadt Secondary School and its Teachers

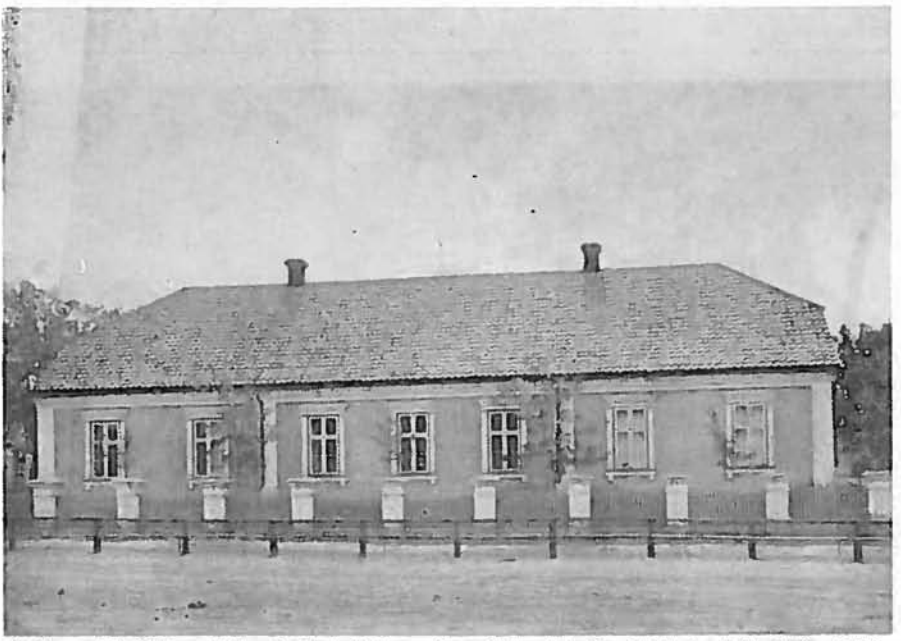
a) The history of the origin of this institution is completely different from that of Ohrloff. Unlike the previous one, it was not the child of men of vision who embraced their fellowship with love. It had not been established and supported by highly-gifted (and for our circumstances, great) personalities. It was (and remained during its first period of about thirty-five years) a child of the government office, and often of the government's whims. Nor did its first teachers measure up to the first teachers of the schools in Ohrloff and Chortitza. In 1835 the Halbstadt District, or Secondary School[29] was established and was conducted in a house located on the yard of the "old" Area Administrative Office in (Old) Halbstadt. (This yard, for a long time, after the erection of the "new" Area Administration Office building in Neu-Halbstadt after 1845, was owned by the Heinrich Letkemann family, which carried on a lumber business there. The house of the original Area Administration Office, and the very similar one of the old secondary school, are still standing today.) The order for the founding of this school was issued by the "Comptoir" of foreign settlers in South Russia at Ekaterinoslav. The originator of this venture was an official of this organization, Faddeiev,[30] a younger man keenly interested in various works of culture. The immediate purpose was the training of candidates for the village-schools and for the position of secretaries in the Area Administrative Office—secretaries with a knowledge of the Russian language. That it was possible to instruct Mennonite youth successfully in the Russian language Faddeiev (who had visited the villages in the Molotschna in the thirties) believed he had seen in the work of teacher Heese in Ohrloff and of teacher Jakob Braeul[31] in the village-school of Rudnerweide. In Rudnerweide, Tiegerweide (where a certain Neumann had aroused Faddeiev's attention as being an outstanding man), in Ohrloff and in Halbstadt—thus in four places schools were to be established with good instruction in Russian. For a long time, however, there were only the school at Halbstadt (supported by the district) and the Ohrloff Society-School. Primarily, orphans and children of poor people "with good abilities" were to study here at the expense of the congregation. These were, therefore, called "church-pupils." The children of well-to-do parents also were permitted



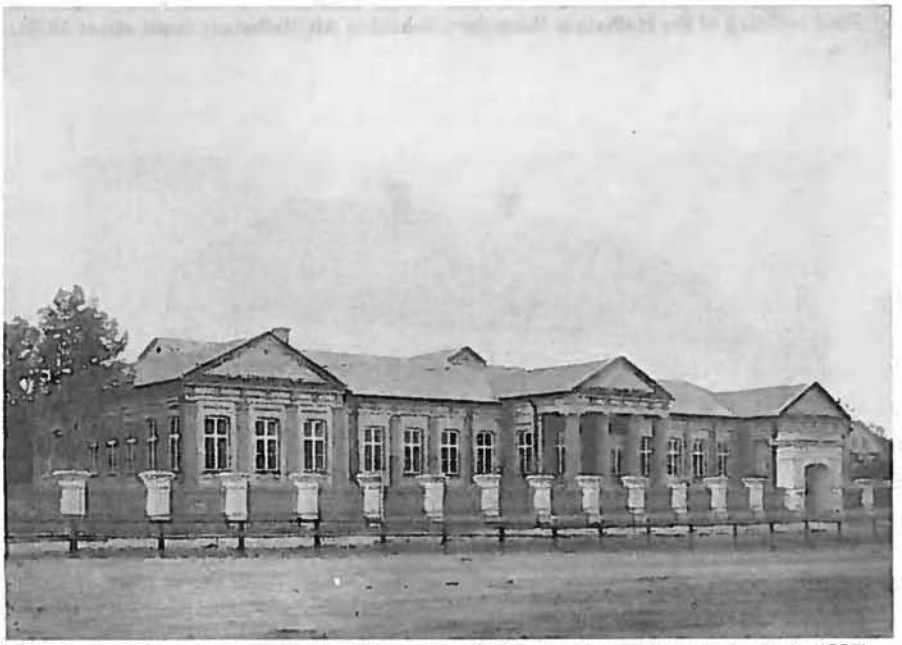
a) First building of the Halbstadt Secondary School in Alt-Halbstadt (built about 1835).



b) Second building of the Ohrloff Secondary School (built about 1860).



c) Second building of the Halbstadt Secondary School in Neu-Halbstadt (built in 1860).



d) New building of the Halbstadt Secondary School in Neu-Halbstadt (built in 1895).

to attend the school at their own expense as public scholars. The "church-pupils" initially were fed and clothed at the school. Much later, a definite sum was stipulated as assistance, which they had to pay back later. In addition, they were obliged to serve in church institutions for as many years as they had studied—naturally with an appropriate salary. Formerly, the church-pupils had been obligated to serve the church a certain number of years (we believe also as many years as they had studied) with an appropriate salary to compensate for the expenses of their training. After the introduction of the new manner of support, the church-pupils were called "scholarship holders." To what arbitrariness this "district-school" (a name which was understood to mean "school of the administrative office," i.e., of the area administrator) was exposed is proven by the fact that the Area Administrator Regier (1833-42), a genial man but a terrible drunkard, removed the entire school equipment for a time to an adjacent house on his own yard in Schoensee. "It is more convenient for me this way"—perhaps also because he wanted his son, or sons, to study.

§337 b) The Teachers of the Halbstadt Secondary School during its First Period from 1835 to 1870 were:

1) Johann Neufeld. 2) A native Russian, for instruction of the Russian language, whose name we have not been able to ascertain, alongside Neufeld. It was probably Faddeiev's idea that at least two teachers should be serving at a school; one of them a specialist in the Russian language. Up to 1870, however, Mennonite authorities could not understand whether and how two teachers should and could teach in one school. 3) Abraham Ediger, Sr. 4) Haupt, a German Lutheran, teacher of the Russian language.

5) Johann Voth. With this man one "really learned" something, teacher Peter Neufeld (still to be described) related even in his advanced age. Minister Bernhard Harder also was full of praise about Voth during the latter's first period. He had been very pious and kind at that time, and he had often prayed with his students. For that reason he had been dismissed (by the Area Administrative Office). In his second period (according to P. Neufeld) Voth had been quite different, very strict and harsh, and had also no longer prayed so sincerely with his students as formerly. All these teachers had been experimenting at the school for about six or seven years. They were followed by:

§338 6) Peter Jakob Neufeld (1842-1844). He had been a student of this school from its very first days. When Voth was dismissed, he had to proceed directly from the schoolbench to the teacher's desk. In spite of his fear and resistance, he was compelled to do it because the Area

Administrator, as well as Cornies (who also had considerable influence—although in a step-fatherly manner—on this school) had commanded it.

Neufeld "would have liked to have gone to university," especially because of the Russian language, but he was not permitted: "These whims would be driven out of him" (Cornies). From Halbstadt Neufeld had to go, again with great fear and in the consciousness of his meager preparation (as also at his first compulsory appointment), to Gnadenfeld as replacement for Heinrich Franz, Sr. (see above). Cornies, who had taken over the administration of the educational system from 1843 onward, commanded this to his great benefit. However, Neufeld came under the direction of his later father-in-law in Gnadenfeld, the excellent and splendid pedagogue, Elder Friedrich W. Lange. After about five years, Neufeld went to Odessa in order to provide for a meager livelihood by teaching at some school, and at the same time study as much as possible, especially Russian, because the deeply-desired university studies were impossible anyhow. He found a position in the fashionable boarding house of the then well-known Swiss pedagogue Knoerri. After that, he was teacher for more than a decade (in two periods) at Steinbach in the small school of the large landowner Peter Schmidt (at one time chairman of the Agricultural Society and then member of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board). This school was also considered to be a "high," i.e., secondary school, because it offered Russian and generally better elementary education, with a smaller student body and better-trained teachers. Even children of Russian noblemen and other outside, non-Mennonite students studied here. Because of illness, Neufeld, for a longer period of time, had to give up his teaching ministry, and he established himself as photographer in Halbstadt; after that in Neu-Halbstadt. Later, he once again became teacher for two periods in the Halbstadt School (more about this later), and in between for three years at the Gnadenfeld Secondary School. All in all, he was—with interruptions—a teacher for forty-four years. In 1886, at age sixty, he finally left the teaching profession and founded the first "Mennonite" printing establishment in Russia in his own home in Neu-Halbstadt, just as he had earlier been the first photographer from the ranks of the Mennonites who had popularized photography among the Mennonites of the Molotschna and thereby created for himself a line of business during the interruptions of his teaching career. Several years before his death he sold (with a neat profit) his "typography by the grace of God," as he called it, because God had given it to him as a "pension-fund" (there being none other!) and because he had marvellously succeeded in spite of the fact that almost all prudent people had predicted a complete fiasco, since he had started it without capital and professional knowledge. His



a) Peter Neufeld (1824-1909), Teacher of the Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld Secondary Schools. Founder of the Raduga printing press.



b) Minister Kornelius Unruh (1849-1910), Teacher of the Halbstadt Secondary School 1870/71, of the Ohrloff School 1873-1905.



c) Heinrich Franz, Jr. (1847-1894), Teacher of the Halbstadt Secondary School, 1874-1880; Founder of the factory Franz and Schroeder.



d) Johann Johann Braeul, Teacher of the Ohrloff Secondary School from 1875 to the present (December, 1910).



Minister Wilhelm Neufeld, Secondary school teacher Gnadenfeld and Halbstadt (1881-1911).

purchaser was the firm of H.J. Braun and Co. The last five years of his life he spent in a comfortable old age in the circle of his family and many friends who loved and respected him. There were especially many from the ranks of his students who [affectionately called him] "daddy Neufeld" or simply "daddy." Even until his very last year he retained his cheerfulness of mind and his erect, lively walk so well-known to his students. After being partially bed-ridden for half a year, he fell asleep in November, 1909, almost eighty-six years old. The author was Neufeld's student at Steinbach, 1861-62 and 1862-63, and later his colleague for ten years at the Halbstadt Secondary School. He always enjoyed Neufeld's warm friendship and love, even though there were great differences in the path of life, in world-view, and in endowment in many areas. But "Uncle Neufeld" could also dispense kind, and yet at the same time, salty criticism. Neufeld's friendly composure, occasionally solemn clumsiness,

was certainly a God-given, important, and positive factor in Friesen's training for decades. Although twenty-five years older than Friesen, "Uncle Neufeld" accepted Friesen's criticism (which was not always very appropriate and tender) with remarkable kindness and objectivity—in pedagogical as well as other areas. Love overcame all differences. Friesen, with many others, confesses with deep gratitude: "This man overflowed with blessing for me!"—especially in the days of a lonely and sad childhood. Minister Bernhard Harder also constantly praised Neufeld's kindness and love, which had remained in his memory as the only oasis in the wilderness of his secondary school. Neufeld's distinguishing characteristic was kindness to his students; unceasing diligence and faithfulness in the work, and love for the work; modesty and meakness (often yielding too readily) in his relations with his colleagues and everyone else. Although characterized by a certain slowness of mind, he remained constantly interested in "everything that is human," especially also as a pedagogue. As an old man with gray hair, working alongside young men of storm and stress throughout the last nine years of his ministry at the Halbstadt Secondary School, understanding and modifying the new programs and methods, eventually he always went along with them. His Christianity was a simple, mild orthodoxy, a faith of the heart and genuine piety, coupled with a tolerance that was almost too great. A beautiful picture of youth, maturity and old age, intellectually and ethically he was always a credit to his church-community. We do well to retain such life-portraits and examples in our memory. Although not as significant as Tobias Voth, Heinrich Heese, Sr., Heinrich Franz, Sr., and Kornelius Unruh, he was, nevertheless, great in his indefatigable diligence, in his love for education within the framework of the Christian faith (and thereby culturally stimulating), and in his golden loyalty to his profession. He was far superior to the last three in his peaceableness and meekness throughout life. At his funeral, the author called him the "typical Mennonite" in his composure, moderation and cautious humor.

We return to the first period of the Halbstadt Secondary School.

7) Jakob Wiebe succeeded P. Neufeld as teacher. He died as church elder in the Crimea in 1880 (cf. "Emigration" #280, above). After him, once again, Johann Voth.

8) Gustav Rempel was teacher following J. Wiebe, from 1859 to 1870. (See K. Unruh, above.) Rempel had been a student of Heinrich Franz and P. Neufeld in Gnadenfeld, and had engaged in Russian language studies in Odessa. For the Russian language he was an excellent theorist, exactly like Heinrich Franz, but not a practician, like Heinrich Heese. After eleven years of secondary school teaching, he

became a businessman. For a number of years he was active as a member of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board, and later as a member of the District-semstvo of Berdiansk.

9) Mark Lukitsch Moliarov was appointed as specialist in Russian by request of the authorities during Rempel's last year, and he served with the latter. After completing a pre-secondary school, Moliarov had entered a teacher's college in Kherson. Soon after he completed his studies there, he came to Halbstadt where he worked for two years: 1869-1871. After Halbstadt, Moliarov became teacher at the military medical school in Kherson.

What the students reported concerning this first period is very similar to what A.A. Neufeld relates in his brochure concerning the Chortitza Secondary School: harsh severity, bordering on cruelty; love and joy in studies were exceptions. They talked about many school-pranks, harmless and malicious, and also of sins in the circle of students. In these reminiscences, the poor bedrooms and the "board" played no insignificant role. The "question of board" was a source of funny and, even more, of disgusting anecdotes concerning all former secondary schools. Through the fees for board, the teacher was supposed to supplement his meager salary and establish his "pension-fund." The students and parents were suspicious and gossiped about it; the neighborhood envied the teacher and his wife because of this advantage! Generally, the principal was observed: *Plenus venter, non studet libenter*—or, translated: A student has to starve, otherwise he does not learn well. Later, we were converted to a contrary view. What has been presented here is virtually everything that we have been able to discover about a thirty-five-year epoch of the Halbstadt Secondary School. We discovered this, aside from the oral tradition, from the few papers when we browsed around for two and a half weeks in 1881[32] among the archival remains of the Inspection Office, the Area Administration Office and the Society Office. The secondary school was a second-rate, little-appreciated, and burdensome object of supervision for the area administrators—this is the impression one receives from the papers, as well as from the stories of former students.

Nevertheless, even this first period of the school has, in spite of all mediocrity, produced some more or less prominent men for the colony: besides Peter Neufeld, we mention Daniel Fast—elder in retirement in the Kuban, Johann Claassen, Liebenau (who died in the Kuban) and Minister Bernhard Harder. It seems strange that, in spite of all the training of "secretarial-apprentices,"[33] neither the Halbstadt nor Gnadenfeld Area Administrative Office was able to employ one Mennonite secretary in a period of more than twenty-five years!

c) The Halbstadt Secondary School and its Teachers during the Second Period from 1870 to 1910. §339

A. In the school year 1870-71, as we know, succeeding Gustav Rempel,

10) Kornelius Unruh became teacher at the Halbstadt Secondary School, together with Moliarov (who was teaching Russian language, and history and geography of Russia) for one school year. About Unruh's manner of work we have already reported. Moliarov served with Unruh in a harmonious understanding which had not been possible with Rempel. Unruh had a perfect command of the Russian language and was enthusiastic about it, as we know. He was also completely at home in the still young, lively Russian pedagogical world of that time, as much so as Moliarov, who was one of the first Russian pedagogical seminarians. Both teachers inspired their students (among whom P.M. Friesen, Cornelius J. Reimer, J. J. Braeul and Wilhelm P. Neufeld were the oldest), each for his own subjects. Beginning with Moliarov, the Russian language, for the first time, was treated as a native language in the secondary school, as Unruh had done in the village school of Blumenort, and that with remarkable success. Moliarov has, to a large extent, influenced P.M. Friesen and J.J. Braeul, and made them life-long devotees of the Russian language. With both teachers the readings, memorization and written and oral restatements (in story-telling, recitation) of both Russian and German masterpieces, were of great importance. Every week literary written assignments in both languages had to be submitted in two drafts, both "rough" and "final." This was alternated with personal compositions: descriptions, narratives, comparisons. Besides this, there were many dictations, with careful correction and analysis, as also with the essays. The success of Moliarov and Unruh was amazing. Braeul and Friesen supplemented their acquired knowledge of Russian under Moliarov in Moscow and Odessa, respectively, as already known, and later followed Moliarov's method more or less faithfully when they themselves became teachers of the Russian language; they differed only in that they practiced translations for a number of years. Mutual translations from both languages are of great value for a deeper grasp of the peculiarity of both grammars and of certain niceties of language comprehension.[34] If, however, because of time and circumstances only one method—for us the so-called "Method of Heinrich Franz" or the "Natural Method"—can be followed, then the latter, no doubt, deserves preference.[35] Without long, special preparation, where would it have been possible in former years even for the very best of the students of secondary schools to pass an examination in the manner as it is required of native Russians? Today, however, this is a routine matter, without arousing even the least bit of

excitement about the degree of training and language skills of our present "pedagogues" (the graduates of the pedagogy courses). For our total civilian and business life, it is of immeasurably greater value to speak and write in native Russian—even with the defects that will naturally be found with the German-Russian—than to be able to render translations according to the system and method of any grammar (but "naturally, practically unable to speak," as it was always stated formerly). Everyone who could really speak, like Franz Dyck (mentioned above), the former teacher at Steinbach, was considered a colonial miracle. With this the whole value and significance of the method introduced into our schools by M.L. Moliarov—in spite of associated defects—has been demonstrated.

11) Karl Wilhelm became teacher for the German subjects and religion for one year (1871-72) after Unruh and Moliarov had left the school. Now serving as editor of the *Odessa-Zeitung*, he is a graduate of the Werner School in Sarata, Bessarabia, and, after leaving Halbstadt, long-time teacher at the Lutheran St. Paul's Church school in Odessa.

12) Mr. Kovaliov,[36] teacher in Russian language, and history and geography of Russia for two years, 1871-73.

Peter Neufeld, the teacher extensively treated above, stepped into Wilhelm's position and remained in the same for two years, 1872-74.

13) Peter Martin Friesen replaced teacher Kovaliov in August, 1873, and remained at the school until August, 1886. Friesen had been a student of Isaak Peters in Sparrau, of P.J. Neufeld at Steinbach, and of Unruh and Moliarov[37] in Halbstadt. Together with Unruh he had (even though because of necessity, in a moderate way) studied in Switzerland. In Moscow he studied especially the Russian language for one year, for a time, together with Unruh and J. J. Braeul as indicated above. Not until the fall of 1874, at the beginning of his second year of teaching, did he obtain his certificate for city elementary school teachers in Odessa, and in March, 1884, simultaneously with J. J. Braeul, he received the district school teacher certificate for Russian language, history and geography. In 1880 he became the leader of the school until 1886 after which he spent two years in the Kuban Mennonite Colony, or he travelled gathering material and organizing it to bring to a conclusion this historical work which now has taken 25 years.[38] In Halbstadt he labored together: with Neufeld, one year; with Heinrich Franz, Jr., six years; with Neufeld again, nine years; with Jakob J. Braeul, half a year; with Abraham Peter Isaak, one year; with Hugo Reichenbach, one year; with Johann J. Wieler, four years; with Bernhard Harder, one year; with Nikolai Heinrich Hildebrandt, six years; and with Hermann August Lenzmann, five years. The best and most harmonious period were the years from 1874 to

1880 in association with Franz and Neufeld (and with Hildebrandt for two years as teaching assistant, and with Wieler for one year)—in spite of the many differences among Friesen, Franz and Neufeld in various ways. The chronological order of the teachers mentioned is presented according to the years of their appointment.

14) Heinrich Franz, Jr., son of the well-known H. Franz, Sr., became main teacher for religion, German, mathematics, etc., in 1874 and served in this institution in its most important reform period for six years only (unfortunately!) until 1880. After completing a splendid preparatory schooling for his day, under his father, Franz had graduated from the missionary seminary in Barmen. Then he acquired the Prussian public school teacher's diploma at the pedagogical institute in Moers after a year's practice. For a time he audited lectures at the French academy at Neuchatel, and also spent some time in Kharkov for the sake of Russian practice. Then, for two years, together with his father, he taught at Rosenhof, after which he left for Halbstadt. Franz came to the school with a general preparation such as no teacher before him had had. With excellent pedagogical endowment, as well as with an elegant, yet usually cordial disposition (and, as a rule, without impetuosity in his association with students and colleagues), he was an eminent personality as a secondary teacher, and he would have become an even greater force for the cause of education had he not soon looked for another position in life. In 1880, after prolonged vacillation, he became a manufacturer (to the great regret of his colleagues and many others). Together with the brother of his wife, P.P. Schroeder, he founded the well-known firm of "Franz and Schroeder" in Neu-Halbstadt. Later, Franz was very active for a number of years as member of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board. He died relatively young in 1894 in the forty-eigth year of his life.

The period of reorganization of the school, begun in the Franz-Friesen period and completed later, we shall treat under "B" and continue here with the enumeration of the teachers.

Peter Neufeld was engaged for the third time at this school, as third member of the trio with Franz and Friesen. He served here until his final retirement from the teaching profession, as we already know, from 1877 to 1886.

15) Jakob Johann Braeul was active here as teaching assistant for Russian from January until June, 1878, during a period of Friesen's illness. He was a graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and held the certificate for public school teachers. After Halbstadt, he was teacher for a year at the secondary school in Chortitza. Subsequently, he taught elementary school for a short time and then returned to private life.

16) Hugo Reichenbach, 1878-79, was a graduate of a pedagogical

institute in Saxony. During the first year of the existence (1878-79) of the pedagogy course (see below), he was teacher of mathematics. Later he became a teacher on the estate of Pfalz-Fein.

17) Abraham Peter Isaak—during the same year as second teacher for Russian, etc. (See Ohrloff Secondary School, above.)

18) Johann Johann Wieler, 1870-83. Teacher of arithmetic, etc. Wieler had been a graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School under Heinrich Franz, and subsequently a probationer for a number of years at the Supervisory Commission in Odessa. He held the certificate for city elementary teachers. Before Halbstadt, he had conducted a private school for a number of years, first in Friedensfeld and then in Nikopol. After leaving Halbstadt he became itinerant minister, and later a preacher in Romania, where he completed his course in 1879, in the fiftieth year of his life.

19) Minister Bernhard Harder, 1880-81, teacher of religion after Franz's withdrawal. (About Harder, see "Mennonite Clergy" below.)

20) Nikolai Heinrich Hildebrandt, 1880-98. Graduate of the Halbstadt Secondary School (then teaching assistant at this school, see "B" below) and of the technical school in Melitopol. He was private (and district) teacher of the Russian and German languages, mathematics, history and geography, as well as secondary school teacher for German. He became teacher in Halbstadt for mathematics, etc. From Halbstadt he was transferred to the girls' advanced secondary school in Sevastopol, and after several months to the technical school in Kharkov, where he has been active as teacher of the German language to this day, December, 1910.

21) Hermann August Lenzmann (son of Elder Lenzmann) 1881-98. He was an outstanding student of Heinrich Franz, Sr., (and subsequently his son-in-law). For a short time he was elementary teacher. After that he finished the course at the mission-seminary in Barmen, and also spent one year as auditor at the pedagogical institute at Moers (?). In 1873 he became teacher of the newly-established secondary school in Gnadenfeld, but left after one year(?), already a young family man, for the University of Tuebingen where he matriculated. For a year he audited in particular the theological lectures of the well-known theologian Tobias Beck, whom he always admired. Subsequently, he returned to the school in Gnadenfeld. At the Halbstadt Secondary School Lenzmann gave instruction in religion, and for several years also in pedagogy in the class for pedagogy, until this subject was taught in Russian. In 1898 Lenzmann returned to the Gnadenfeld School as teacher for religion and German. In 1907 he resigned from his teaching position and became owner of a printing shop in Grosstokmak.

22) Peter Abram Ediger (see "Ohrloff," above) 1886-96. After P.M. Friesen, he was principal of the school and teacher of the Russian language—later of mathematics.

23) David Hermann Hamm. In 1886 he became teacher of the German language replacing P. Neufeld. He was a graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School during Lenzmann's first period. He obtained the diploma of a private tutor for German. From Halbstadt he was transferred in 1899 to the girls' advanced secondary school in Uralsk, and from there in 1909 to the girls' advanced secondary school in Ekaterinoslav, where he is teaching at present.

24) Vassily Lukitsch Ivanov, 1889-90. Teacher of Russian; graduate of an institution for teachers.

25) Vladimir Sergeievitsch Kandaurov, 1890-96. Teacher of Russian, with the same education as Ivanov.

26) Alexander Michael Burzev—since 1893 (until now) teacher for drawing and penmanship. Graduate of the Stroganov Art School in Moscow. He is simultaneously teacher of these subjects at the secondary school in Prischib.

27) Peter Peter Fast, 1895-1898. Teacher of the Russian language. Fast is a graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and of the pedagogy course in Halbstadt. He was a village school teacher for several years, prepared himself privately for the graduation examination, and graduated from the faculty of history and philology of the University of Moscow. After Halbstadt, Fast entered the service of the ministry of finance. Subsequently he was teacher of German for a number of years at the advanced secondary school in Feodosia, and since 1909 he is the director of the technical school in Berdiansk founded by the late A.A. Neufeld.

28) Grigory Stepanovitsch Dsyk, 1896-1902. Successor of Ediger as principal and teacher of Russian and pedagogy. Earlier he had been teacher for a number of years at the Gnadenfeld Secondary School. He had the certificate for teaching in advanced city schools; later he became inspector of a city school.

29) David Johann Dueck, 1896-1909. Teacher of mathematics. Dueck attended the Halbstadt Secondary School and graduated from the six-year course of the technical school in Melitopol, and from the seventh year in Kharkov. He obtained the diploma of a private tutor in mathematics, and then taught at the Gnadenfeld Secondary School for twelve years, but in 1896 he left for Halbstadt. At present Dueck is director of the Molotschna mutual credit union in Neu-Halbstadt.

30) Wilhelm Peter Neufeld (son of P.J. Neufeld) has been teacher of

religion since 1898. Neufeld was a student of the Halbstadt Secondary School with Rempel, Unruh, Friesen, and his father as teachers. After a brief period of service as elementary teacher, he entered the Missions Seminary at Barmen. When he had completed his work there, he was auditor of the pedagogical institute at Neuwied. He holds the private-tutor diploma for German. Between 1881-1898 he was teacher of religion and German at Gnadenfeld, and since then at the Halbstadt Secondary School up to the present. Neufeld is a minister of the Gnadenfeld congregation.

31) Alexander Panteleimonovitch Voloshkevitch, 1898-99, teacher of Russian.

32) Konstantin Timofeiovitch Pomphylov, 1898-1908, teacher of history, geography and natural science; district teacher.

33) Kornelius Peter Bergmann, 1899-1906. After graduating from the Ohrloff Secondary School and the Halbstadt pedagogy course, Bergmann was a village school teacher for several years. He then entered the institution for teachers[39] in St. Petersburg, and after graduation became teacher of the German language in Halbstadt as successor to Hamm. In 1906 he went to the university at Jena. After some time there he became ill, and is still apparently incurable.

34) Grigory Kusmitch Rodin, 1899-1901. Teacher of the Russian language. Graduate of the Teachers' Institute in Feodosia.

35) Jakov Arssenievitch Svetlov (Schlifstein), 1901-1903. Teacher of the Russian language. Secondary school education; private tutor's certificate.

36) Spiridon Nikolaievitch Degtiarev, 1902-1908. Principal of the school and teacher of Russian and pedagogy. Graduate of the Feodosia Institute for teachers. At present Degtiarev is public school inspector of the Yalta-Sevastopol-Eupatoria district. (See Gnadenfeld.)

37) Nikolai Ivanovitch Beloskursky was teacher of Russian for three months in the fall of 1905. Graduate of a teachers' institute.

38) Hermann Johann Penner, 1906-1909. Teacher of Russian. Graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School, the pedagogy course in Halbstadt, and the Teachers' Institute in St. Petersburg. In the fall of 1908 he passed the matriculation examinations, and is presently a student of the faculty of natural history at the University of St. Petersburg.

39) Boris Konstantinovitch Stefanov, 1906-1909. Principal of the school and teacher of Russian and pedagogy. He has a secondary school education and the district school diploma. At present he is principal of the secondary school in Prischib.

40) David Johann Claassen, 1906-1908. Teacher of the German language after Bergmann. Graduate of the Halbstadt Secondary School, private tutor for German, and has been teacher for many years in the Kuban. (See #247, above.) At present he is plenipotentiary of all Mennonites of Russia in matters related to the forestry camps. He has been elected president of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board. Also a minister.

41) Kornelius Abram Wiens. Since 1908 teacher of German following Claassen. Wiens graduated from the Ohrloff Secondary School and from the pedagogy course in Halbstadt. After being a village school teacher for many years, Wiens went to Basel and was auditor there at the school for ministers. For many years he was teacher of religion and German at the girls' school in Halbstadt, and currently is in his third year of teaching at the secondary school. Wiens has been elected as minister of the Halbstadt congregation.

42) Peter Jakob Braun, since 1908 teacher of history, geography and natural science. Braun is a graduate of the Halbstadt Secondary School, and of the course in pedagogy. After having taught in a village school for several years, he entered the Teachers' Institute in St. Petersburg. After the completion of his studies there, he has been teacher in Halbstadt.

43) Johannes Gerhard Harder, since 1910 teacher of Russian and mathematics. Graduate of Halbstadt Secondary School and the course in pedagogy. He was village school teacher for a year, and then graduated from the Teachers' Institute in St. Petersburg.

44) Andrei Nikolaiievitch Fominsky. Since 1909 teacher of Russian. Graduate of the Teachers' Institute in Fedosia.

45) Peter Kondratievitch Pavlenko. Since 1909 principal of the school and teacher of arithmetic and pedagogy. Graduate of the Teachers' Institute in Feodosia. Pavlenko earlier was a teacher at the higher city school in Orechov. The present teaching staff (December, 1910) consists of the gentlemen mentioned under numbers 26, 30, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45.

The (Special) Teachers of the Model School §340
(cf. "B" below)

1) Hermann Isaak Fast, 1883-85, was semstvo-teacher for several years, graduated from St. Chrischona, and was then called to the Model School. After that, he was city missionary for a year under the direction of the Lutheran pastor in Feodosia. Subsequently he was tutor of a young count in St. Petersburg for about ten years. At present he is teacher in Canada—also a minister.

2) Abraham Joseph Hottman (Separatist, see *#74*), 1884-90. He had been semstvo-teacher and later graduated from the pedagogical institute in Lichtenfels in Wuerttemberg. He served for one year with Fast, and later for five years with Harder; after that, he became a farmer.

3) Gerhard Bernhard Harder (son of the minister Bernhard Harder), 1885-90. Harder had graduated from both the Halbstadt Secondary School and the course in pedagogy. For a short time he was elementary teacher and then graduated from the upper two-year course in St. Chrischona. After a year of private studies in Russian, he was appointed to the Model School. After his withdrawal from the school, he became itinerant minister of the General Mennonite Conference and minister of the Halbstadt congregation.

4) Peter Franz Dick, 1890-1903. Graduate of both the Halbstadt Secondary School and course in pedagogy. After a longer period of service as village school teacher, he audited classes for a short time at the seminary of Muristalden, near Bern (see Kornelius Unruh and Friesen, above). From Halbstadt Dick went to the Mennonite school in Berdiansk, and later to the village school in Johannesheim (Volost of Schoenfeld).

5) Miss Pamphilova, 1900-01. Graduate of an advanced secondary school.

6) Mrs. Sinaida Grigorievna Dsyk, 1901-02. Graduate of an advanced secondary school.

7) S.D. Dermostuck, 1902. Graduate of a teachers' seminary.

8) Abraham Julius Unruh, 1903-05. Graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School and of the pedagogy course in Halbstadt. After serving as elementary teacher for some time, he attended the Deaf and Mute Teachers' Institution in Frankfurt under director Vatter. After that, he taught for a number of years at Einlage. From Halbstadt Unruh went to the Maria Deaf and Mute School in Tiege where he works at present.

9) Miss Sophia N. Hildebrand, 1903-04. Graduate of an advanced secondary school.

10) Miss Katharina K. Janzen, 1904-06. Graduate of an advanced secondary school. Presently teacher at the Halbstadt girls' school.

11) Gerhard Heinrich Doerksen, 1905-10. Graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and the pedagogy course at Halbstadt. He was a village school teacher and was auditor for a short time at Muristalden (see Dick). At present, Doerksen is house-father of the institution for deaconesses, "Moria," in Neu-Halbstadt.

12) Miss Jelisaveta Kusminit na Ossipova, 1906-07. Graduate of an advanced secondary school.

13) David Daniel Boschmann, since 1907. Graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and the course in pedagogy at Halbstadt. Holds a private tutor's diploma for mathematics.

14) Bernhard Bernhard Wiens, since 1910. Graduate of Ohrloff Secondary School. Previously he had been village school teacher in Ladekopp.

15) Peter Ignatievitch Kudin, since 1910. Principal of the Model School, which since 1910 has had a three-year program. Graduate of a teachers' seminary.

The present teaching staff (December, 1910) is composed of the last three mentioned gentlemen.

B. The Re-organization of the Halbstadt Secondary School §341

1) From 1835 to 1869 the school had, one might say, stagnated. In the latter year the higher colonial administration in cooperation with the general administration (Governor-General of South Russia and Bessarabia, Kozebue) had called representatives of the Mennonites, as well as of the other German colonists, to Odessa to discuss not only the adopting of a rational approach to the teaching of the Russian language, but also to find ways whereby the whole school system could be improved. The Molotschna colonies and the Chortitza colonies established scholarships (two from the former; one from the latter), named "Alexander Scholarships," for young Mennonites who desired to attend the state advanced secondary schools. (The first recipients were: from Molotschna, the brothers Esau, one now a physician; the other, an engineer in Ekaterinoslav. From Chortitza the recipient was the former secondary school teacher Wilhelm Penner [see below]). Related to the establishing of the scholarships was the creation of the "Molotschna Mennonite School Board" (see below) and the appointing of the above mentioned teacher M.L. Moliarov especially for the teaching of the Russian language, as an equal with Gustav Rempel, who could reconcile himself as little to this circumstance as his former teacher Heinrich Franz, Sr., could. Franz had left Chortitza in 1858 partly because a teacher for the Russian language had been engaged; Rempel also left his position mainly because of this circumstance. (However, later on he was by no means an enemy of the new teaching methods for Russian language which have been described above.) The reorganization of the school into two classes had already begun with the coming of Moliarov, and so, with the arrival of Unruh, this system became more firm. Yet it was an unfortunate arrangement that Unruh, the main teacher, taught

all subjects except Russian language, history and geography of Russia, Russian orthography and lettering. These subjects were taught by Moliarov and he was given half instructional time for them. This division of subject matter and time remained till 1874. "Uncle Neufeld" and P.M. Friesen (as the "Russian") also maintained this same division during 1873/74 since no one as yet had been able to make different arrangements; however, Neufeld had combined the two classes again for the teaching of religion. This meant that he had the entire school to himself daily for one and one-half hours. Of course, for "the Russian" this time was lost, but in spite of this loss, he did have plenty of time in each class for teaching Russian, the history and geography of Russia, and for penmanship.[40]

Heinrich Franz, Jr., who as far as we know was the main teacher from 1874 to 1880 (in the last years as principal—verified by the Supervisory Commission), had the healthy idea at his appointment definitely to decide against the above-mentioned division of labor: Friesen was asked to teach general history and geography, as well as natural science. In principle, this action was correct but it was certainly not beneficial for the teaching of Russian since the three subjects (general history, geography and natural science) were being taught in the German language. Friesen modified the science course and benefited the teaching of Russian by offering the course according to Uschinsky's *Dietsky Mir* (The Children's World) Parts I and II, and by using visual aid materials and illustrations from Rebau, Wagner, Schreiber's *Bild*, etc. This was the first attempt in Mennonite schools to teach a scientific subject in the Russian language. This innovation was tolerated for personal reasons. In August 1875 Franz succeeded in convincing his colleagues and the local authorities to accept the latest changes regarding the modification and improvement of the school system. The school was classified as a two-level school with a four-year course, but since the students had such varied preparatory education (mainly insufficient) some remained at one level not only for two but for three and sometimes for four years; and with the appointment of Franz, Friesen (in Halbstadt), Unruh and Braeul in Ohrloff, a very expanded education course was followed.[41] The ideals were the following: for the "Germans" the standards of the German higher middle school or the Swiss secondary school; for the "Russians" (Friesen and Braeul), the standards of the sixth class of the higher state school. In June, 1875, the scholarship student N.H. Hildebrand (see above) graduated from the school with honors. Franz recommended him for a position to instruct a preparatory class designed for the weaker or the very young students. Since it would not be costly, this class, with Hildebrand as teacher, was readily established. The implementation of this class resulted in the

school operating at three levels with a six-year program and more, a fact that caused considerable dissatisfaction among the general public. An even more serious objection (to the length of the school course) was raised when the question of the right to curtail the length of study time during the "obligatory duties" (see above, "military service" and "pedagogical courses," etc.) became a serious issue. People were asking: ". . . six years or longer after the village school in order to spend three years (at that time) in the forestry service?!" And the question was certainly a legitimate one; however, the village school teachers began to work with such energy at this time,—and in such close contact with the secondary schools that more boys could be accepted who were allowed to omit the preparatory class. This cooperation of village school with secondary school occurred during the administration of Andreas Voth, Abraham Goerz and others (see "School Boards") and was led on by a number of brilliant, self-taught men among the village teachers. This circumstance developed into a competition among the village school teachers and the village communities, a competition which was a noteworthy benefit for the whole school system in the Molotschna. In fact, it so happened that especially gifted boys, students of exemplary village school teachers, needed to spend only one year or even only a half year in the lower level and then went on in two years to complete the standards demanded in the upper level with good success. After two years of such temporary arrangements Hildebrand enrolled in the vocational school in Melitopol (see above) and P. Neufeld was appointed as fully qualified teacher. Ohrloff and Gnadenfeld soon followed Halbstadt's example. By the school year 1877/78 the three Molotschna secondary schools had two basic levels each with a two-year course and a preparatory class with a course of studies that was to exemplify the ideal educational requirements of a village school graduate (see further, "Program"). In June, 1878, these three schools, for the first time, graduated a number of students who received an official certificate with all legal rights included (curtailing the length of "obligatory duty" from six to three years; see below). This was granted on the basis that the students had been instructed in a precise program (see below) and had been examined in an official manner—meaning that the members of the school board conducted the examinations and the secondary school teachers of the other two schools always served as assistants in the third school (as had earlier been practiced for a few years). This method of examing was used until the middle eighties and had the following extremely healthy effect: it maintained mutual control among the teachers; it furthered the development of the secondary school teachers; it established a unity among the three schools so that they assumed parallel status. This parallel was especially noticeable between Halbstadt and Ohrloff.

§342 2) The Pedagogical Course in the Halbstadt Secondary School.

A new and mighty step forward to improve the quality of the teacher training course in the Halbstadt Secondary School was taken when a two-year pedagogical course was established for those graduates of the basic course who desired to become teachers.[42] A most tireless and outstanding advocate for establishing this course was the chairman of the school board, Andreas Voth of Neu-Halbstadt, who, together with his colleagues and co-workers, especially Elder Abraham Goerz, the secondary school teachers of Halbstadt, Ohrloff, and Gnadenfeld, and a few of the outstanding village school teachers labored from 1874 on, and subsequent to the visit of Totleben (see above), in tireless effort to establish the new program for village and secondary schools. The program consisted of the two-year pedagogical class (or the two-year pedagogical course) and the instructional program of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board; in other words, an all-encompassing school policy. For this purpose numerous conferences took place in which church elders and area administrative officers took part. In addition, meetings and commissioned papers of school boards and teachers, and frequent visits to Odessa and St. Petersburg were undertaken. Only the most pertinent information in the documents recording these activities will be considered in this writing. The following is a brief summary of the development of the pedagogical course, the reorganization of the two basic levels into three classes each with a one year course, and the amalgamating of the formerly mentioned preparatory class with the Neu-Halbstadt[43] village school to form a model school closely tied to the pedagogical course. (The students[44] of the second year pedagogical class gave their trial lessons in this school under the supervision of their teachers.) Out of the total number of qualified graduates of the three Molotschna secondary schools as of June 1878, one pedagogical class of twelve students was formed in August of that year. Their training was to compare with the first-year course of the regular two-year course for teacher-training aspirants. The teachers, except for Franz, were really unqualified for this considerable undertaking. They were, besides Franz, the ones mentioned previously, Friesen, Neufeld, Reichenberg and Isaak (see below—"Program"). The program of studies was distributed in a practical manner over the two years. For example, the required courses for the first year in pedagogy were psychology and theory of methods; in the second year, history of pedagogy, and continuing from the second year, yearly guidance in practical methods or "model lessons" for the second year course. In Russian grammar, the first year requirements were review and intensive study of etymology; the next year, syntax, and all other subjects in similar manner. This combining of the two-year courses in the pedagogical classes made the yearly admission of students

less difficult than the yearly enrollment of new students in the two two-year basic levels. Consequently the pedagogical class remained intact up to the year 1896 (in Chortitza to 1908, in spite of the fact that so competent a scholar as A.A. Neufeld taught there). The second year (1879/80) the pedagogical course was offered, the amalgamation of the preparatory class with the Neu-Halbstadt village school was achieved to form a model school. This model school had only one class at first, then developed to two classes, reverted to one class again, but in 1903 returned to two classes, and from August 1910 had three classes. The two unwieldy basic classes with the two-year courses were modified into three classes each with a one-year course, but only in the school year 1884/85 under the express "permission" of the directors of public schools. This occurred in Halbstadt as well as in Gnadenfeld and Ohrloff because the high achievement of the schools in the villages made such modifications possible. (Chortitza decided to follow a different route: in the 1890s four one-year basic classes were set up from the two with the two-year courses. Following the example of the three oldest Molotschna Mennonite secondary schools, all later secondary schools in the Molotschna settlements followed the Chortitza pattern—all in the Chortitza settlements as well.) Concerning the language of instruction, in 1886, when Friesen left Halbstadt, all subjects, not considering religion and German, were taught in Russian except for mathematics, and even mathematics was given in Russian one or two years later in all three Molotschna Mennonite secondary schools. Taking any other course was unthinkable if one desired that absolutely necessary association with the higher state schools. If one third of instruction time is conducted in German (religion and German language), and if the church services and the households use German as the basis of communication, then this is enough time to ensure the maintenance of the German language among the Mennonites. The Russian language, on the contrary, requires much more emphasis and preparation than does the German, since the latter has the advantage of being spoken at home, but the Russian is not used by nine-tenths of the student body. Without close ties to the Russian system of higher education and public instruction, and without a proper command of the Russian language, at least among our Mennonite intelligentsia—teachers, etc., we are not citizens of Russia but merely partially enfranchised squatters.

3. Documentary Supplemental Details. §343

We offer the following documents to throw more light on the reorganizing of the secondary schools:

Translation.

"Ministry of the Crown Lands—Department of General Affairs,

Colonial Section. First Desk—December 17, 1876. No. 7400.[45] To the Supervisory Commission of alien settlers in South Russia.

"The representatives[46] of the Mennonites in the villages of the Gnadenfeld, Halbstadt, and Chortitza districts have made a personal representation by presenting a brief to the Honorable Minister requesting confirmation of the prepared teacher training program designed for both secondary and village schools. This training course has been developed by the teachers,[47] church elders, and school board members of the Mennonite schools. In addition to this confirmation, it is requested that the administration and supervision of the secondary and elementary schools be left to the Council of Church Leaders and the school board so that attendance at the secondary schools in Category III and the elementary (village) schools in Category IV could be substituted for the military service requirements, and that those young people asking for appointments to village school teaching positions may be engaged, provided they have completed the secondary school course or have passed the [secondary school][48] examination set by the examining board. Accompanying this request was an outline prepared by a committee (No. 3691) regarding the development of a two-year pedagogical course in the Halbstadt Secondary School,[49] and a request to release the trust fund for this school together with the accumulated interest to be administered at the discretion of the Halbstadt School Board.

"After the Minister had received both the letter of request from the Mennonite representatives and the outline (No. 3691), his Excellency deigned to decree that:

"1) The trust fund of the Halbstadt Secondary School in the sum of 8423 rubles, including the accumulated interest up to the date of transfer, be released to the school board of the said school to do therewith as the board pleases in order that this fund and the accumulated interest be used exclusively for the development of the pedagogical course in the said school; for the adapting of this same course in the said school to the buildings presently occupied, and for construction of new facilities, and for the further maintenance of the said school.

"2) The program as presented by the representatives regarding the secondary and elementary schools in the Mennonite villages of the Chortitza, Gnadenfeld, and Halbstadt area be implemented immediately; except that in the Halbstadt Secondary School this program shall be followed only until the pedagogical course is fully operative.

"3) A two-year pedagogical course be instituted at the Halbstadt Secondary School, and that permission be given for those persons who complete the course in this class successfully, as well as those persons

who, although they do not complete the course, but pass the required examination, to be engaged as teachers for the Mennonite village schools.

"4) The school board of the Halbstadt Secondary School in cooperation with the Council of Church Leaders be assigned the responsibility to work out a program for the school including a pedagogical course and a set of directives regarding the duties and privileges of the school board as it supervises the manner of teaching in the schools and the ways of conducting examinations of those persons who wish to enter the teaching profession. After careful scrutiny by the Supervisory Commission, the program including the directives is to be presented to the Minister for official ratification.

"Concerning the request of the representatives to have their secondary schools in the third and the village schools in the fourth category included in the fulfillment of military obligations, His Honor has found insufficient grounds to offer any kind of privilege since on the basis of a temporary but highly official list of all secondary schools, published on June 10, 1876, which was added to the edict of the ruling senate, dated July 5, sub No. 25,416, all secondary and village schools in the villages of the alien settlers are already included in these two categories regarding the discharge of military obligations.

"On the basis of such a decree from the Honorable Minister, the Department of General Affairs lets the Supervisory Commission know it may take steps pertaining to the implementation of the above and asks that the project for instruction (in the German language) and two programs be remitted. Director Baron Medem. Sections head A. Ewald."

§344 Originals of the programs referred to, signed and sealed by the Supervisory Commission on orders from the Minister of Crown Lands (who, at that time and until 1881, was in charge of school matters for the colonies) lie in the archives of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board, and they confirm this program for the Chortitza, Halbstadt, and Gnadenfeld areas. Regarding the petition to which the Minister of Crown Lands replied with the resolution decreeing the programs to be instituted as mentioned above, a brochure states: "The schools in the Mennonite colonies of Molotschna, . . . presented by the Church Elder Abraham Goerz and published by the Molotschna Mennonite Church Conference, Berdiansk. 1882," page 13:

". . . In August of 1876 the programs developed for the village and secondary schools during the summer of that year were presented to and adopted by a general conference convening in the church at Halbstadt, attended also by representatives of the Chortitza Council of Church Leaders."

The final statement of a directive No. 46 [50] given by the Supervisory Commission to accompany the decree of Dec. 17, 1876, states:

". . . The Supervisory Commission herewith instructs the school board to send the properly certified copies of the Ministry of Crown Land's directive, the programs and the instructions which the Honorable Minister has verified [the instruction, however, only in principle] to the Gnadenfeld and Chortitza school boards and to report to the commission the completion of this assignment. . . ."

The idea regarding the pedagogical course, etc., became a unifying factor for Molotschna and Chortitza (recall H. Heese, Sr.'s "joint teaching institute!"); those graduates from every secondary school who wanted to become teachers were to enroll in the pedagogical course offered in Halbstadt, but this never happened with the Chortitza students. (Concerning the establishment of a local pedagogical course, see below, "Chortitza Secondary School.") This project, the coming to fruition of a common "Mennonite" teacher training program as expressed in the above-mentioned documents, saved the Molotschna Mennonites from a pedagogical course to be conducted in conjunction with the Lutherans and Catholics of the Prischib area. We read about this in the recently mentioned brochure of the Molotschna Mennonite Council of Church Leaders, page 16:

". . . Regarding the organization of the pedagogical course, the Honorable Baron [Medem, Department Head in the Ministry of Crown Lands, a promoter of Mennonite school affairs] had planned to provide a pedagogical course for us together with the Prischib area. . . . Thereupon, the [mentioned above] representatives petitioned the Honorable Baron most humbly that such arrangements were not in our best interests; that we Mennonites could do nothing less than press for the establishment of a Mennonite teacher training institute. Both village and secondary schools as well as the teacher training institute would have to have in their entirety the characteristics of church schools. Only such certification of our schools would make them function for our purposes; namely, that they would train not only the school teachers who were also the religion teachers of our children, but also our future preachers and spiritual counsellors. All our schools must be so firmly based on the Mennonite articles of faith that the pupils will receive an education which will qualify them to accept positions as ministers and elders. According to our concepts, and in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, persons eligible for clergy positions are chosen from among the people.[51] The senior government officials understood the major implications of our educational problem. . . . After the representatives had given him [Baron Medem] the assurance that the Mennonites of

South Russia would participate as a body in the maintenance of the pedagogical course before they would deliver up their schools, he promised the representatives . . . to plead our cause with the Minister. At that time, our representatives had no doubt that the congregations[52] would welcome with joy such rights and favors."

Never had a clearer and more correct statement been made regarding the obligation of all Mennonite schools toward the preparation of those persons eligible for spiritual leadership. Had our representatives not considered this obligation at all when they participated about three years previously in Schoenwiese in a secondary school conference with Lutherans and Catholics, members of churches who held the view that preparation for the ministry could be attained only in theological seminaries? Had they, in an evil hour, placed more importance on "German" than on "Mennonite?" Did they actually believe that Catholics, Mennonites and Lutherans could ever act as one unified body[53] in matters of religion? Had they forgotten about the unbridgeable gulf that separates the Mennonite elementary teachers from the Lutheran and Catholic elementary teachers in regard to their responsibility as teachers of religion?

How deeply and correctly the educational needs of the Mennonites were understood by the men working with these matters in 1876 is proven by the introduction of the petition (on the basis of which Resolution No. 7400, 1876, was published) in which they combine this matter with Totleben's activities, and their consequences for the Russian Mennonite brotherhood. (See above, Sec. 274, 2 and Sec. 279, 5.) The representatives[54] write under the date Nov. 16, 1876, (cited in Brochure of the Molotschna Mennonite Council of Church Leaders, page 9) as follows:

"When the new law about universal military service was issued in the year 1874 . . . the Right Honorable Count Totleben was sent to us by His Most Gracious Majesty, the Tsar. . . . The brief which at that time was presented to Totleben by the leaders of our congregations contains . . . the petition for autonomy of our schools. . . . The Count promised to use his influence on our behalf and gave us [Totleben was the personal deputy of His Imperial Majesty] firm hope that our petitions would be granted. When a deputation arrived in St. Petersburg, in 1875 for an audience with His Lordship, Count Totleben to discuss pertinent and future questions, he encouraged us to take specific steps regarding our schools. . . . At the same time the Count advised us to fit our programs to the programs of the state schools and not to set lower standards. . . ."

3) It is necessary to add, first, that the village and secondary school §345

curricula for the three Mennonite parent congregations, Chortitza, Halbstadt, and Gnadenfeld, and for all other Mennonite churches were certified in principle, as was the organization of the pedagogical course. Secondly, the curriculum of the secondary schools, which was much too difficult, was simplified in view of the establishing of the pedagogical course, and a specific curriculum was developed for this course. In the same manner a directive was written for the school board. None of these three documents was ever officially approved, no matter how frequently requests were made. Thirdly, soon after the surrender of the Mennonite schools to the Ministry of Public Instruction (May 1881) the program of the Molotschna Secondary School, as we all know, was changed. The two preparatory classes having a four-year course were modified into three one-year classes having a more simplified curriculum, which, however, did not have "lower" standards (Totleben!) than the public institutions, as this was "tolerated" by the administrative school boards. What happened at the secondary school level also happened at the village school level (the approved and extremely detailed programs are in the archives). Fourthly, as far as we know, Chortitza never again seriously discussed a common pedagogical course, and the loaning of the scholarship student P.M. Riediger (graduate of the teacher training institute of Halberstadt in Prussia under Director Karl Kehr) to the Halbstadt pedagogical course was curtly refused. The Chortitza Secondary School, as we shall see in the following section,[55] followed its own course.

§346

III. The Chortitza Secondary School

a) This institution is third on the list of institutions of higher learning of the Mennonites in Russia. As we know, this institution was founded in 1842 by Heinrich Heese, Sr., and was continued from 1846 to 1858 by Heinrich Franz, Sr., both of whom are well known to us as is the sixteen-year founding period of the school. The permission (or more correctly, the directive—see above "Halbstadt Secondary School"—Faddeiev) to open the school was signed [56] by the Supervisory Commission on June 3, 1842, with the arrangement to accept six boys of poor families as wards of the congregation, as in Halbstadt. Apathy of the local Mennonite administrative body toward the cause made the development of the institution difficult. Heese complained: "The pupils [wards] are in rags. No one has any heart for this good cause; in fact, it is detested. One needs to wait patiently for a more propitious time, otherwise all efforts are in vain." Heese, as at one time T. Voth in Ohrloff, had to beg insistently for "Kirpitsch" (dung for fuel). His salary was not paid punctually. We are fully aware that he left greatly distressed, making room for Franz. The latter, in his well-known

customary manner, worked energetically until 1855! Then a plan was formed to establish a "locally developed class in Russian in the secondary school." Through the attempted implementation of this plan the above-mentioned discord developed between Franz and the administrative body: the Area Administrative Office, the association, and the Council of Church Leaders. As a consequence, Franz moved from Chortitza to Gnadenfeld in 1858. But the "locally developed class in Russian for the secondary school" remained a project, and merely a project, for a long time. It seems that this circumstance was designed by the leadership of the congregations to irritate Franz enough to cause him to resign.

§347 b) Neufeld called the period from 1858 to 1877 a new and brighter time for the school. At this time Heinrich Epp, who later became an elder, was at first the only teacher of religion. Later he became main teacher of religion and of the "German subjects" as they were called. In one of his letters Heese, Sr., referred to Epp as "a humble servant of Jesus."

One of Epp's students, now an aged man, characterizes him as follows:

"When I enrolled in the secondary school in 1869, the teacher was in his prime. I loved him at first glance, and in the three years of my stay at the school I learned to appreciate and respect him more and more. His friendly nature won all hearts. Sometimes when his serious but kindly eyes rested on me for a moment, I could have shouted for joy, so deeply touched were my emotions that this man loved me. When he led his students into an appreciation of the eternal truths of God's revelation in the Bible, his eyes shone their brightest. At such times we hung on every word he spoke. How skillfully he could endear himself to us! How his heart burned for his Lord and for both the younger and older children in his charge! And rooted in this love lay his ability, the method of his teaching skills. Without ostentation, without noticeable irritation he was able to guide the exuberant energies of the young into the bounds of decency and good manners. How we avoided behavior offensive to him! Every pedagogical journal today speaks about the dangers students face in matters of sex; in fact, it seems that no fitting solution can be found to deal with these problems successfully in the school setting. When I read articles like that I am always reminded of my teacher. His love found the right word, the fitting occasion to speak to his students about such sensitive matters and in such a way that we were just thrilled through and through with a holy awe. When he allowed the light of the Word to illumine our thoughts, speech and actions, no wrinkle, no corner remained dark; our errors lay exposed before our eyes. At such times

who would not have reached in quiet submission for the saving hand of the mighty, helping Jesus? And so the one gone home was an inspiration to us to move closer to the Savior. I still remember very clearly that during a discussion we were having about the work of Christian counselling, he quoted Gellert's statement: 'Oh God, what a joy it must be, to be the rescuer of a soul!'

"Our teacher was not a learned pedagogue as we understand this qualification today. The basis of all his teaching ability lay, as has been stated, in his devotion to his profession. Love was his art, his methodology. Love dictated his attitudes when misdemeanors on our part unavoidably occurred. His method of instruction was characterized by a directness that presented the subject matter to the student without digressions and which made him face the assignment squarely. However, if the student had grasped the main idea of the lesson, he did not have any difficulty in exploring its ramifications, mastering the material and thereby achieving a higher level of insight. In this way the teacher, by descending to the level of the pupil, lifted the pupil to the teacher's level of thought. This was the secret of the great success of his instruction.

"And when he spoke to us, who were preparing to become teachers ourselves, about our social position, he emphasized above all else our duty to the profession. In the utmost sense of the word, he himself—the teacher—dedicated his entire life to the church. Paul's exhortation to Titus (Titus 2:7 and 8) regarding the latter's duty were words he (the teacher) accepted as having been spoken directly to him and this concept he drove home to his students as well! He was in the habit of saying, 'The most successful means to earn respect and honor in the face of the congregation and of your fellow students is to be a personal example of integrity in religious conduct and propriety.'

" 'Refrain from being do-nothings in your life!'[57] he warned us again and again when he spoke of our duties as members of the congregation and especially of our involvement in the life of the school. 'When you look for the source of the frustrations which you will encounter, look first within yourselves and determine where you err and come short. When you do that, things will improve.' On one occasion when I rather rudely insisted on my rights, he spoke emphatically to me: 'If you allow such an attitude to persist when you rise to speak in your congregation, you will have a difficult row to hoe; you need to develop some modesty.' On another occasion we were returning from a visit to a school where we had discussed the negligence of the local authorities regarding school visitation, the teachers' salaries, etc., I offered some sharp criticism, but he opposed my views by quoting I Corinthians 13:7: 'Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. . . .'

When he spoke about the monetary aspects of the teaching experience, he warned us never to adopt the wage-earner's approach, asking only 'What's in it for me?'" [For more comments see Epp's biography in "Mennonite Clergy."]

A.A. Neufeld makes the following comments about Epp:

". . . More so than his predecessors, Epp emphasized didactic teaching. He was not so much concerned with imparting all kinds of facts and skills to his students, nor was he concerned primarily with developing their intellect, but rather, he attempted to subordinate the instruction in general to the development of values and attitudes. For this reason the instruction in religion and in the German language had priority with him. But the instruction of Russian could also be quite practical for the same purposes since instructor Epp had acquired fluency in the language [for further details, see below] and did not underestimate its importance. It followed, therefore, that the students of that era knew Russian not only in theory but also, like their predecessors, were fluent in it. . . . As in the day of Franz and Heese, so the school remained a teacher training institution and pupils were encouraged to assist in the teaching program to gain some preparation for their profession. [This method, partially an imitation of the then famous ' Lancaster-Method, ' was practiced not only by Franz, P. Neufeld, Gustav Rempel, Herman Janzen, and Kornelius Unruh, but also in all intermediate and village schools having resourceful and ambitious teachers. It became popular following the brilliant example of Franz W. Lange and was carried on with remarable skill and success. (Lange was a teacher of Franz, Neufeld and others.) In part this is the reason for the undivided intermediate schools of those days having the ability to provide such a good education. Older boys and youths, and also especially gifted, industrious girls of good character felt honored, as did their parents, to be chosen (entirely at the discretion of the teachers) as 'helpers.' These assistants always worked directly in the teacher's presence during school hours—or rather within ' earshot ' of him: sometimes in an adjacent room. Also during the hours of preparation in the evening, the ' teachers ' were leaders and supervisors especially in the boarding schools—remembered mostly with sadness—or, when the teacher was ill or could not be present for any other reason, naturally, these assistants confidently assumed the ' teaching ' duty, and the other students submitted themselves—as we remember from our own experience—remarkably well to this arrangement. Of course, if there was disorder, the regular teacher's firm hand sharply censured the rebels. We are successors who have lost this method through disuse for we thought it was clear to us that the multiple-class system in schools and the special preparatory pedagogical course was an absolute necessity of the

day.] . . . On the other hand, the activities of the school were further restricted at the time: girls were not admitted. . . ." (See below "School at Davlekanovo"—co-educational.)

To complete H. Epp's portrait as a teacher let us consider another source, a brochure which the son of the deceased minister, D. Epp, generously made available to us (*Heinrich Epp*, Leipzig, August Pries, 1897). In it the following account about the process of his training and education is given (we use the material freely and in shortened form):

Heinrich Epp was born in Chortitza on Dec. 18, 1827. His father was Minister David Epp; his mother, Helena (nee Thiessen). His father was a very popular pulpiteer. After completing the village school, he lived on the estate of a Russian aristocrat and was the playmate of a young nobleman (this was not of minor importance for he became fluent in the knowledge and use of Russian). Later, he was enrolled in the small private school at Steinbach in the Molotschna. From 1844 to 1847 he was a student at the Chortitza Secondary School—two years under Heese; one, under Franz. In 1847 he was "obliged" to become the secretary of the Chortitza Agricultural Society. When he was twenty-three he married Anna Siemens. At this time (1852) he testified to his spiritual attitudes in his diary as follows: "Today is Palm Sunday, the day which we celebrate in memory of the glorious entry of our dear Lord into Jerusalem. He was recognized and honored by the masses as the Son of God. They did not hesitate to cry a joyous Hosanna to Him, the one persecuted by the world. And yet this triumphant journey led him to greater agonies and eventually to the bitter death of the cross. He, who had the whole world at his feet and who is its almighty ruler, descended from his heavenly throne, took on flesh and blood, and allowed himself to be killed, that the road to salvation might be opened for us, lost men. And through his merit he has obtained for us the righteousness we lack, and so has become the intermediary between the righteous God and sinful mankind. . . . So it is through the righteousness of Christ alone that we can reach Heaven. O God, may my sole endeavor be to seek earnestly after this righteousness with prayer and supplication. May I lay aside all my sins and may all my actions be dedicated to Thee! Give me a faith that rests on the solid foundation of Christ and whose Words[58] reveal themselves in the love for my fellow-men. Grant our congregations peace, and foster in them the true love of the brethren and do not reckon our misdeeds to our account! Look upon us in mercy!" (We can see that the religion teacher, minister, elder and advocate for the congregation is solidly established in this young twenty-four year old "secretary." Although he, himself, is perhaps unaware of these qualities, he most likely has intuitive feelings about this which he very modestly locks deep in his heart. The spiritual teachers of the Mennonites were

born in this way and developed in the bosom of the church. His theology, too, was essentially established. Soon he was to present this theology to the students and the congregation, and twelve years later, as instructor of religion, he had, naturally, deepened and systematized his views. We refer to Sections 11, c; 15, g; etc.; 294, B. etc.) In 1854 Epp was appointed teacher at Neu-Petersdorf, where he had a school of seven children. His salary was 100 rubles cash, 11 measures of grain, some pasture land and so on. Then in August he was appointed as Area Administrator in the Jewish colony (compare Sec. 128, c, above). In April, 1856, Epp was informed by the Area Administrator that a Russian school (actually a Russian class in the secondary school) was to be formed and he offered Epp the teaching position if he would become more proficient in Russian. Epp went to Ekaterinoslav to teach in the private Mennonite school there. He received support from Chortitza as he prepared for the pedagogical examinations. He passed these and graduated as elementary school teacher with the state certificate.[59] The establishing of a Russian school or class, as we know, did not materialize. Epp became Franz' successor as teacher in the secondary school in August 1858 and worked there for nineteen years. (See "Mennonite Clergy" about his election into the ministry and eldership.)

§348 c) Not until March 1, 1871, did the Chortitza Secondary School receive a teacher especially for the Russian language. This was the assistant lecturer Shalavsky, the former teacher in Grossweide, in the area of Mariupol. A.A. Neufeld says the following of him:

". . . A good, old, staunch Polish gentleman whose main objective was to complete his last teaching years in peace. The school could hardly experience a fresh revitalizing through him. [Compare Moliarov in Halbstadt.]"

"The fifth teacher in succession engaged[60] in this school was Wilhelm W. Penner, who had received a church scholarship and who came to the Ekaterinoslav advanced secondary school after completing the Chortitza Secondary School under Epp. He completed the advanced secondary school course in 1874 and was the teacher of Russian from August of that year to June 1881. 'He was the first of the teachers who had the good fortune to have been trained from his youth in a systematic manner, and we must not underestimate this advantage.' "

Here, too, too much was attempted in the name of thoroughness. For example, the complete course in algebra was taught! Neufeld describes Penner as especially calm, patient, exceptionally punctual, conscientious and fair. He mentions him as an example to his students.

"Unfortunately, the working together with Epp lasted only three

years. The latter, who was elected as church elder . . . had already appointed an assistant in the last years."

The sixth teacher after Epp left was this interim assistant, Johann Epp, 1877/78.

The seventh teacher in succession to be appointed was Peter Martin Riediger, 1879 to 1892. (Riediger is the nephew of H. Heese, Sr., and son to Martin Riediger—see above "Ohrloff Secondary School".) After completing the Chortitza Secondary School he entered the advanced secondary school at Ekaterinoslav and after completing the basic course (class six) entered the teacher-training institute at Halberstadt in Prussia. The principal of this school at that time was the famous pedagogue Karl Kehr. After completing his course in this institution, Riediger became a teacher of religion and German, etc. in Chortitza. Since then he has gone into private work: he is the evangelist of the "Evangelical Mennonite Congregation" of Altenau-Sagradovka.

Jakob Abram Klassen (1881-90; 1893-95) became the eighth teacher. Klassen was a graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School, and a former student of Heinrich Epp. He was elementary school teacher in city schools and had been a village school teacher from 1864 to 1872. He was unable to teach for a year because of illness, but then from 1873 to 1881 he taught at the Mennonite school in Ekaterinoslav. "His school in Ekaterinoslav was considered worthy to be designated as exemplary at that time," a colleague writes of him. From his school he was able to send many a student directly to the fifth class of the advanced secondary school. This same colleague calls him a "master teacher among the teachers of the Chortitza Colony. His knowledge far exceeds that of the village teachers." He was a classic follower and model of the "Kehrians." After 1881 he again had to rest for two years because of illness, but following that he taught at the secondary school from 1893 to 1895 and has been teacher of religion and German at the Chortitza Girls' School since that time, whose host and father he actually is.

A.A. Neufeld expresses himself as follows about Riediger and Klassen: "After his return, Riediger had the opportunity not only to perpetuate the spirit of Kehr in his own teaching at the school but also to influence his colleagues in the village schools in a similar manner [after all, he had been Kehr's student, and this man was no stranger to the ambitious teachers of Chortitza]. Most of the teachers now teaching [1892] are former students of P. Riediger and Jakob Klassen. . . . It is not fitting for me to make a judgment on the work of my colleague Riediger and my direct predecessor J. Klassen. However, I should say that Riediger remained a grateful student of Heinrich Epp and that he tried to perpetuate the good traditions of those days. I may say that J.

Klassen, through loving devotion to his profession and through his exceptional sense of duty and conscientiousness in both major and minor matters, can always be thought of as an example to us, his followers. Concerning the abilities of Klassen and his students in the Russian language, this note is enough, that they rose to the occasion in the face of the ever increasing demands. Most of their students passed the final examinations which were set in those days [from 1882] by the official inspector of public schools. Most of the students were successful also in passing the teacher examination."

§349 d) "In Riediger's and Klassen's time the modification of the secondary school [in Chortitza] finally took place [Neufeld continues] in respect to meeting the qualifications demanded of a teacher training institute of that time. . . . The higher quality of Russian instruction, the eventual teaching of all subjects (except German and religion) in Russian, the fact that the instructional methods were fully developed especially in that the Russian language was no longer treated as a foreign language, but as a second mother tongue—all this was still not enough. Increasingly the view gained popularity that for adequate preparation, a teacher training institute was a necessity. [The previously mentioned copy of the Act decreed by the Minister of Crown Lands, March 17, 1876, and all ramifications of the same had seemingly been completely forgotten in Chortitza! Neufeld, who in 1876 was a mere boy, knew absolutely nothing about it, of course. Think of the eighty-year-old Heese's 'Common Teacher Training Institute.'] In 1889 [ten years after the opening of the pedagogical course in Halbstadt] the Director of Public Schools prescribed the instruction in pedagogy of the congregational pupils of the graduating class during the afternoon, and the hiring of a third teacher to ease the load of the teacher of Russian. . . . For this purpose a special two-year pedagogical class was organized in 1890 at the secondary school. Then, for practical training for those students in the class, a model school was opened and for this school a third building was erected at a cost to the congregation of around nine or ten thousand rubles." As we are aware, the two basic programs remained two-year classes for many years and were then separated into four one-year classes; the two-year pedagogy class was divided in 1908.

The ninth teacher to be appointed in succession to work with Riediger and Klassen in 1889 was Johann Penner, a graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School. He had been a village teacher in Blumengart for a few years and had then spent three years studying at the University of Leipzig, and in Odessa. After a time, he accepted and kept for many years (to 1910) the position of secretary to the Mennonite



a) Wilhelm Wilhelm Penner, Teacher of the Chortitza Secondary School 1874-1881.



b) Minister Peter Martin Riediger, Teacher of the Chortitza Secondary School 1879-1892.



c) Abram Abram Neufeld (1862-1909), Principal of the Chortitza Secondary School 1890-1905, Director of the Business School in Berdiansk, 1905-1909.



d) Minister Peter Johann Penner, Teacher of religion at the Chortitza Secondary School from 1892 to the present (December, 1910).

official in charge of the affairs of the forestry service.

A.A. Neufeld (frequently quoted) became the tenth teacher and worked from 1890 to 1905. He was principal and main teacher for Russian, pedagogy, etc. Neufeld had completed the Ohrloff Secondary School under Unruh and Braeul, had enrolled in the Berdiansk advanced secondary school, and had completed the sixth class of this school as a brilliant, highly endowed and industrious student. But he was forced to withdraw: there had been sharp differences between students and staff, and he allowed all blame for this to rest on himself instead of naming the guilty parties. Later (1883), he wrote the school's examinations as an external student, and then enrolled in the historical-philological faculty of the New Russian University in Odessa. During his advanced school and university studies he showed an unusual ability for, and love of, work. It is characteristic of him that he declined the Alexander Scholarship as a fifth year student of the higher school in order that others might be able to take advantage of it. From then on he supported himself, and subsequently his young family (he was still a student when he married), by giving classes and then by literary journalism. After a few years of study in Odessa, even before he graduated, he entered the University of Berlin. Here he worked for two years and he achieved a highly respected status in the Russian academic society. He returned to Odessa to complete his final examinations. Early in his stay at Odessa some of the more prominent professors had kindly drawn him into their circles of acquaintances as one of their own. For a few years Neufeld was a teacher at the advanced secondary school of Berdiansk, and at Bachmut. For fifteen years, beginning in 1895, he was principal of the Chortitza school. For family reasons he left for Berdiansk where he founded a highly successful vocational secondary school having the privileges of a state institute. His untiring, never-ending work—work that would have been too much for an ordinary man—was halted by his sudden death from a stroke in Berdiansk on January 9, 1909, in his forty-seventh year. He was one of those people who never have time to be ill even if they are not feeling well, or one of those men who never have time to take a thorough rest! Difficult experiences of life, too, had contributed to the deterioration of his health.

Neufeld had completed his university training not only as "one who was also enrolled among the company of the learned," but also as a truly educated person having profound knowledge and broad vision. Regarding his moral and spiritual characteristics, he was and remained an idealist, in the best sense of the word, to the day of his death, in spite of many circumstances in his life that could have embittered him. That this man dedicated his vast knowledge and superior strength in the greatest part to the relatively small world of the Mennonite schools is

cause enough to bring him high recognition. In particular, it is because of him that the Chortitza school matters were advanced so strongly. The fact is that the Old Colony school, in general, has surpassed the Molotschna school since that time, whereas up to that time the latter was considered superior. The major part of the Chortitza village school area (including Schoenwiese) developed two and four (Einlage) class schools. The secondary schools of the Chortitza region, as well as those established by Chortitza, have four classes (except the pedagogical class in Chortitza), and have five teachers (as opposed to three classes with three teachers in the secondary schools of Molotschna, or in schools established by the Molotschna; see below). Neufeld never became a "confessing believer" as we understand the concept, but he was a "searcher after God," and we have never been able to think of him in any other way but to be reminded of the Savior's words: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness . . .", and of the expression of a great Christian: "Blessed are those who are homesick, for they shall arrive at home." He was much offended not only by the "much speaking" and "small achievements" of the most verbal of the believers, but also by the ugly factious spirit present in the different camps of the confessing believers. We cannot do otherwise but save for posterity a well-warranted expression of Neufeld's which he made to a good friend of his who gladly and loudly "at the right time and at the wrong time," "by coincidence or by premeditation" made his faith known. Here is Neufeld's statement: "Listen here! If I had what you profess to have I would be different not only from what I am now, but from what you are!" And if we are definitely opposed to some of Neufeld's expressions on theology, and although our expectation that we arrive at the apex as a member of the group of leading believers (our honored readers understand well what is meant) to become their strength (we ignore here completely the different religious camps; the obvious differences among these camps, as is well-known, is unimportant to us) has not been fulfilled in the way[61] we had hoped, we must still express our honest conviction that Neufeld dedicated his strong idealism and his concept of duty as his "reasonable service." He made this dedication as completely as any of us "believers" do, speaking generally, and fully according to the insight he had. He wanted a unity, a oneness of understanding, perception and faith, of speech and action in the entire personal, domestic, professional, cultural and social life of a person, and Neufeld believed only a person with such a standard of life to be a Christian. Did he find many among us with standards like that? Besides having great intellect, he was a man of deep emotions, full of longing for ideal friendship, love and domestic bliss.

The extremely important Neufeld era in the Chortitza Secondary

School lasted fifteen years. The Chortitza School Board (Council of Church Leaders and the area administration officers) made a good decision when they hired Neufeld. The pedagogical class and the model school were fully organized when he assumed responsibility. He had considerable influence on the whole Chortitza school region. His magnanimous character earned him a degree of trust and respect from the administrative office and school board seldom experienced by a Mennonite secondary school teacher; consequently, he was able to achieve those things for the sake of the school which others found impossible to bring about. For some time he was even entrusted with a kind of sub-inspectorship[62] over all the German colony schools in the Ekaterinoslav District. The Council of Church Leaders and the members of the teaching faculty gladly permitted him a kind of independent major leadership of all the elementary and secondary school matters so that he was influential and independent when school matters were under discussion at the meetings of the district congregations. A lasting influence of the Neufeld era derives from the resolution accepted long ago that the two-year pedagogical class be modified to a three (or four?) year teacher training course for the Chortitza settlements and the Chortitza District. So it is not the fault of the Mennonite congregations nor their leaders if the training course is still not in existence. Of special interest is the extraordinary unity in the Chortitza area among early and later settlements, and the estate owners of the Chortitza colonies, when school matters were being considered; this was shown when they levied taxes on themselves and gave donations. It must be noted that the Mennonite teacher-training program in general, the program which the secondary schools offer together with the pedagogical courses (in Halbstadt and Chortitza) is not adequate for today and especially not for our particular circumstances. Until teacher training institutions are formed (or better—four-year teacher training institutes—but which really must be preceded by finally changing the schools of the Molotschna type from the three-year into four-year classes and into four classes) it would be better under these circumstances to establish three classes in a three-year program in Halbstadt and Chortitza instead of the two-year pedagogical course. We must not forget that our village school teachers are the only ones who give systematic religious instruction, and that the secondary schools are at the same time our most important preparatory schools for our ministers (compare above—Document, Dec. 17, 1876, statement of the deputy of Baron Medem). Also, let us remember that the village school teachers are to be bilingual and are to instruct in both languages! To elaborate on the short biographical sketch of A.A. Neufeld we offer a few lines taken from his obituary written by Heinrich H. Epp, principal of the Chortitza Secondary School and a former student of Neufeld. These words from Elder Dirks' 1909 *Yearbook*:

". . . With his death we lost a man who had given his total knowledge, work, and endeavor to the service of his people, a man who spent many years in unrelenting labor and used his superb knowledge to raise the level of life of our countrymen. Under his enlightened leadership, thanks to his constant care, the Chortitza Secondary School, with its pedagogical class, has developed into an educational institute of immeasurable benefit to the Chortitza congregations. This school has produced many a loyal, conscientious worker, and many a capable man has been prepared here for the teaching profession and for life. The continued growth of a positive attitude toward education among the Chortitza colonies can be credited to Neufeld, who awakened this attitude. The results of his beneficial activities became more pronounced day after day. However modest and unassuming in his outward appearance, he demonstrated boundless energy when betterment of the school was at stake. He was a greatly talented teacher, and knew how to keep his students working, how to inspire a high idealism in them. He was a loyal colleague who gladly assisted the others by offering good advice and by also bearing their frailties in love. God blessed him with the power of profound thought. He was a loyal friend, a pleasant social companion without pride or guile, having a heart of love for his family and for others—this was Abraham Neufeld, one of our best men. May he remain a shining example to us and to our children!"

It is to be noted further that, thanks to Neufeld's prominence in and beyond Chortitza, the secondary school today has a principal who is a Mennonite (see below), something that has not been the case in Halbstadt since 1896.

The "Molotschna man," A.A. Neufeld, served the Chortitza community for fifteen years; the "Chortitza man," Peter Heinrich Heese, the Molotschna region for seventeen years.

§350 e) On June 3, 1892, the Chortitza Secondary School celebrated its fiftieth anniversary.[63] It is common knowledge that the school at that time already had two, two-year basic classes, a two-year pedagogical course, and a model school. In the main address on the occasion of the jubilee (see footnote) Neufeld pressed hard for division of the two basic classes into four one-year classes. This division occurred soon after. At the time the secondary school had eighty-eight students (of these, eight in both years of the pedagogical course; in all classes, a total of 15 pupils were supported by the congregations, the school having graduated 105 of them so far; at the beginning the number of scholarship students was six, then eight, later on ten and since 1891, 15) and the model school had 37 pupils. The faculty for 1892/93 was made up of the following gentlemen: A. Neufeld, principal, and teacher of Russian, German, and



a) Secondary School in Chortitza.



b) Secondary School in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna.



c) Halbstadt Girls' School at Neu-Halbstadt.



d) Chortitza Girls' School.



e) Ohrloff Girls' School at Tiege, Molotschna.

pedagogy in the pedagogical class; Peter Johann Penner (see below), teacher of religion and German; Johann Penner (see above), mathematics, natural science, and art; Johann Klein, history, geography, etc.; Johann Froese, teacher of the model school.

§351 Following is the chronological list of teachers of the Chortitza Secondary School according to the times of their appointment after A.A. Neufeld.

The eleventh teacher was Peter Johann Penner, from 1892 the teacher of religion and German; graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School under Epp; self-educated; formerly a village school teacher (see below) and from 1890 to 1892 teacher of the model school; one year as secretary of the Area Administration Office in Jasikovo; minister.

The twelfth teacher was Johann Gottfried Klein (Lutheran) from 1892 to 1907 the teacher of history and geography; middle-school education; private tutor of history; presently (Dec. 1910) principal of the New-York Secondary School (see below) and teacher of Russian.

The thirteenth teacher was Dietrich Heinrich Epp (son of secondary school teacher and elder, Heinrich Epp) from 1895; teacher of history and geography; graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School under Neufeld and of the St. Petersburg Teacher Training Institute.

The fourteenth teacher was Peter Philippovitsch Busuk, from 1903; teacher of Russian; graduate of the teacher training institute in Bielgrad.

The fifteenth teacher was Heinrich Heinrich Epp (brother of the above) from 1905; principal and teacher of Russian and pedagogy; graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School under Neufeld and of the historical-philogical faculty at the University of Moscow.

The sixteeth teacher was Johann Johann Klassen, from 1905; teacher of religion and German; graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School under Neufeld, and of the Basel Evangelical Seminary; prior to and after attendance at seminary, he was a village school teacher for six years; minister.

The seventeenth teacher was Johann Abraham Froese, from 1907; teacher of mathematics; graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School under Riediger; private tutor of mathematics; village school teacher from 1888 to 1892; since then to 1907 teacher of the model school.

The eighteenth teacher was Heinrich Jacob Dyck, from 1909; teacher of penmanship and art; graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School under Neufeld; completed the art teachers' course of the Dresden Art Academy with a certificate for middle schools and earned a similar certificate to qualify in Russia by writing the examination in Kiev.

The men listed above (except for Klein) form the present faculty (December 1910).

Teachers of the Model School

1) Peter J. Penner (see above)—1890-92.

2) Johann Abraham Froese (see above)—1892-1907.

3) Gerhard Peters, from 1907; graduate of the Chortitza Secondary School under Neufeld; before that he was a village school teacher in Chortitza for fourteen years.

At present (December 1910) the Chortitza Secondary School with seven teachers, has four one-year basic classes, two one-year pedagogical classes, and one single-class model school with one teacher.

§352 *IV. The Gnadenfeld Secondary School, since 1873*

Since we already know something about the education and the length of service in the Halbstadt Secondary School of the first two teachers of religion (main teachers in their time), Hermann Lenzmann and Wilhelm Neufeld, and since the Gnadenfeld school, like the two oldest Molotschna secondary schools had three classes and joined in the pedagogical course in Halbstadt, we can afford to be quite brief regarding the Gnadenfeld school. The school is located in the building purchased from the volost in which at one time the Gnadenfeld Society or the "Brethren School" had its home (see above Sec. 52). The other teachers of religion and German were as follows: during Lenzmann's year of study in Tuebingen (see above "Halbstadt") there was a Mr. Dieterichs, a Lutheran, a graduate of a seminary in Germany ("Johannaeum?"); Peter J. Neufeld and P.H. Heese for German, etc. (see above); (Wilhelm Neufeld and Hermann Lenzmann as above—see "Halbstadt"); after Lenzmann's second term, Benjamin Ratzlaff, from January 1907 to June 1909, graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School and the Evangelists' Institute of St. Chrischona, minister of the Alexanderwohl congregation; Johannes Heinrich Unruh, from 1909, graduate of the Halbstadt pedagogical secondary school and temporary auditor in Bethel College, Newton, Kansas, North America, private tutor in German; teacher of mathematics, D.J. Dueck—see above, "Halbstadt Secondary School"; teacher of Russian—Mr. Titov; Mr. Demidov (both district school teachers?); Abraham Abraham Braun, graduate of the Gnadenfeld Society School under Heinrich Franz, Sr., and the Lange brothers; had a teaching certificate for city elementary schools. Braun had taught at the Neu-Halbstadt village school and now had taught thirty years in the Gnadenfeld village school. Then there was Mr. Poroikov, Moscow University student, and district school teacher;

Grigory Stepanovitsch Dsyk (see above, "Halbstadt"); Spiridon Nikolaievitsch Degtiarov (see above, "Halbstadt").

The present faculty (December 1910): Feodor Vassilievitsch Teneta, principal, graduate of the Melitopol vocational school, private tutor; Anatoly Nikolaievitsch Toptschiev, graduate of the Feodosia Teacher Training Insitute; and J.H. Unruh (see above).

In the summer of 1910, the Gnadenfeld Regional Meeting decided to appoint a fourth teacher if a suitable candidate could be located. That would make the first secondary school of the Molotschna type having a fourth teacher—certainly a timely move.

Secondary or Intermediate Schools of Recent Times and of the Present §353

V. The Ohrloff Sagradovka Secondary School (area Kherson, Volost Ohrloff, village of Neu-Schoensee) from 1895; three classes with three teachers; school of the volost community, Molotschna type.

All following secondary schools were established after 1905:

VI. Nikolaipol, Chortitza settlement "Jasykov," area Ekaterinoslav; four classes, five teachers; supported by the Ignatievo settlement in cooperation with all other Chortitza areas.

VII. New York, Chortitza settlement "Ignatievo", area Bachmut, Province Ekaterinoslav; four classes, five teachers; supported by the Ignatievo settlement in cooperation with all other Chortitza areas.

VIII. Praetoria, Chortitza settlement in the region Orenburg; till now, three classes, four teachers; private school supported with help from the Chortitza areas.

IX. Alexanderkrone, Molotschna, Halbstadt Volost; three classes, three teachers; private school.

X. Karassan, Crimea, three classes, three teachers (Molotschna type); private school.

XI. Spat, Crimea; three classes, three teachers (Molotschna type); private school.

XII. Schoenfeld-Krassnopol, (volost developed by private land owners) area Alexandrovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav; three classes, three teachers (Molotschna type).

A few other similar intermediate schools are now being established.

XIII. Secondary School—i.e., an intermediate school; co-educational; at the railroad station Davlekonovo in the Province of Ufa.

Since this school developed into a type foreign to us, we will deal

with it more intensively although it is one of the latest schools. Until 1870 (considerably longer in Ohrloff) the secondary schools as well as the private intermediate schools were co-educational and no one hindered this practice nor found it offensive, although it should be noted that not many girls attended. In this year (1870), however, the colonial and the school administration office forbade co-education on the grounds that it constituted a danger to morals. No doubt the real reason was that no Russian schools practiced a co-educational system. Special girls' schools [64] modelled after the secondary schools were to be founded. However, that took a long time (see below "Girls' Schools") and even to the present day it is a private matter. In those days the Mennonite society learned to regard the whole matter of co-educational intermediate schools as a risk, and dangerous to moral standards, whereas co-education in the village school was considered natural. In fact, our brethren in America have only co-educational intermediate schools right up to college level—a common practice there. For some time now the education of our young people in co-educational schools is being considered, in fact, is being pressed. This desire has actually become reality for the first time in the school at Davlekonovo. This school exists officially under the name of a "Ministerial State School of two Classes." These schools provide the same privileges as the secondary schools, teach an extensive curriculum, and are able to arrange a suitably chosen number of "sections" which have the same status as classes.

We can report the following about its existence and method of operation:

The school is now in its fourth year of operation. According to the curriculum it is a four-class secondary school. The relationship between the administrative board and the institution is most cordial. To the present, co-education has worked well. The girls teach the boys manners. One of the boys explained to his parents: "If the girls were not there, we would be more uncouth; but they are so pious!" To the present there has been absolutely no criticism about the system from an intellectual standpoint. Some educated strangers who have observed the school closely bear glowing testimony to the decent, sibling-like behavior of the boys and girls. Based on what this school has to show after being in operation for three and one half years, this system is only to be recommended— ". . . when capable, experienced, and pious teachers work at the school; not teachers of bureaucratic soul, or those having no soul at all."

The school had 44 students in the first year; 87 in the second; and 130 in this, the third regular school year.

Classes (sections) at present (December 1910): two classes in the

preparatory school; four classes in the secondary school.

Teaching faculty:

1) Kornelius Gerhard Neufeld, principal; graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School; private tutor for mathematics; studied for four years at the Evangelical Seminary in Basel and at Spurgeon's "Pastor's College" in London; formerly taught three years in the intermediate school at Sagradovka; minister of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

2) Peter Johann Thielmann, teacher of religion; elementary school teaching certificate; minister of the Mennonite Brethren Church; previously taught for eighteen years in the Sagradovka village school.

3) Daniel Peter Enns, teacher of mathematics and physics; graduate of the Halbstadt Secondary School pedagogical class; private tutor of mathematics; twelve years experience as village school teacher at Molotschna and three years secondary school teacher in Spat.

4) Miss Nelly Reimer, teacher of Russian; graduate of the pedagogical class of an advanced secondary school;[65] first level private tutor; previously had one year experience teaching in the girls' school at Gnadenfeld.

5) Johann Peter Rogalsky, teacher of Russian and history; graduate of the pedagogical class of the Halbstadt Secondary School; teacher certificate for schools of two classes; had five years experience as village school teacher.

6) Gerhard Johann Gaede, teacher for German and natural history; graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School and the Halbstadt pedagogical course; had twelve years of experience as village school teacher.

7) Jakob David Schellenberg, graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and the Halbstadt pedagogical course; had seven years experience as village school teacher.

8) Viera Petrovna Kolpina is the teacher of needlework.

The school is supported by a private society of six persons: "None of the members are wealthy; some of them are well-to-do; but all sacrifice willingly." The construction costs were approximately 25,000 rubles. Besides this, one of the members, using personal funds, is building a school hall 105 feet long, 41 feet wide, and 21 feet high, having hot water heating and costing about 10,000 rubles. This building will be used for school programs, song festivals, and popular lectures. In the spring of 1911 the society hopes to add a second wing of 93 by 35 feet. May the new and fresh endeavor experience rich blessings and success!

§354 We must add that all secondary schools of the Mennonites in Russia regard the pedagogical classes in Halbstadt and in Chortitza respectively as the continuation for special teacher-training in spite of the fact that individual young people frequently write their teacher-training examinations elsewhere (that is, they circumvent the pedagogical classes), mostly at the various state schools which in most instances have the authority to grant teaching certificates; or they appear before the special examinations committees sitting at the centers of the Russian school districts. Even the graduates of the pedagogical course need to sit for examinations in a state school or in an examination committee (the choice is up to the candidate). To this moment the school districts have petitioned in vain for the authority to grant teaching certificates to the graduates of the pedagogical course. This authority had actually been granted by the Ministry of Crown Lands (Document of December 17, 1876) but it was rescinded in 1890 by the Ministry of Public Education.

§355 The intermediate schools of the older Prussian immigrants who settled in the Province of Samara are of a special type. These also are so-called "two-class state schools" and are supported mainly (or completely?) by the semstvo.

XIV. Koeppental, Volost Malyschinsk, Novousensk District.

XV. Alexandertal, Volost Alexandertal, Samara District.

These two volosts order their affairs, in matters of teacher training for the village schools, according to the Halbstadt Pedagogical Secondary School.

§356 B (2). Mennonite Girls' Intermediate Schools.

We have mentioned before that organization of secondary schools specifically for girls was begun by the Supervisory Commission in 1870 after the notice was given forbidding the continuation of co-educational schools. The volost communities have not considered this problem for some time (if at all?). The present female intermediate schools are all private enterprises. The first of such schools we know of was founded by the frequently mentioned Andreas Voth, chairman of the Molotschna School Board, who took it upon himself to host the school in his own home in Neu-Halbstadt. The school was located there for many years. The teacher was a Moravian lady from Koenigsfelden in Germany, a Miss Sophie Schlenker; later she married Schaefer. This was about in the middle 70's. However, since the school remained small, it could not continue to function. In the early 80's a similar school was organized, initiated by the former secondary school teacher Heinrich Franz, Jr. This school developed slowly, eventually to become a functional educational

institute, and now has operated for a number of years in a well-organized manner.

I. The Halbstadt Girls' School

This institution has been operating in five classes since the beginning of the school year 1910/11. The classes compare favorably with the classes of the state-run advanced secondary schools for females. Other than the right to exist, this school, and any of the other schools referred to below, has no other rights or privileges. The supporting society desires to raise the level of the school to a regular eight-class advanced secondary school, and eventually to develop it into a fully accredited female teacher-training institute. (The eighth class of the advanced secondary schools for females is, as we all know, a special pedagogical class in Russia.) For some time teachers of religion and German were the deceased Abram Abram Ediger (who in his youth was the teacher in Gnadenfeld); then Isaak Nikolai Ediger, graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and the pedagogical course at Halbstadt, formerly village school teacher in Neu-Halbstadt and Tiege; after that he was minister to the forestry unit, and presently he is the Mennonite teacher of religion in the vocational school founded by A.A. Neufeld. After him came Kornelius Abram Wiens (see above—Halbstadt Secondary School). Of the ladies teaching at the school those of longest tenure and most influence were Miss Grikovskaia and Miss Willms.

The present faculty (December 1910) is made up of:

1) Miss Elizabeth A. Griskovskaia, Lutheran; graduate of an eight-class advanced secondary school; principal of the school which has been approved *de jure* in her name.

2) Benjamin Heinrich Unruh, teacher of religion (see below—Halbstadt Middle School).

3) Miss Katharina Jakob Willms, graduate of an eight-class advanced secondary school.

4) Miss Anna M. Fast, having similar qualifications.

5) Miss Katharina H. Janzen—see "Model School."

6) Miss L.L. Schilling was the music teacher for many years.

II. The Chortitza Girls' School

A.A. Neufeld was especially active in getting this school established. It has been functioning since 1895 and at present has four classes. The staff consists of:

1) Miss Viera Ssarpinskaia, principal; graduate of an eight-class advanced secondary school.

2) Jakob Abram Klassen (see above—Chortitza Secondary School); teacher of religion and German.

3) Miss Agnes Jacob Klassen (daughter of the above); private tutor of mathematics.

4) Miss Anna Janzen, graduate of an eight-class advanced secondary school.

5) Miss Kornelia Thiessen, teacher of needlework.

Established after 1905:

III. New-York, Bachmut District

With three classes (to the present: December 1910). Faculty (with possible errors):

1) Miss Elizabeth P. Ediger, principal; graduate of an eight-class advanced secondary school.

2) Johann Berg, teacher of religion. . . . (?)

3) Miss Maria Dmitrievna Baikovskaia, graduate of an eight-class advanced secondary school.

4) Miss Agatha Rempel, teacher of needlework.

IV. Ohrloff, Molotschna, with three classes

Faculty:

1) Miss Helena J. Willms, principal; graduate of an eight-class advanced secondary school.

2) Jakob Heinrich Janzen, teacher of religion and German; graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School; private tutor of German; minister of the Gnadenfeld congregation.

3) Miss Alexandra Romanovna Lemsakova, graduate of an eight-class advanced secondary school.

4) Miss Luise H. Friesen, teacher of music.

All the above mentioned girls' schools are operated by societies.

V. Gnadenfeld, Molotschna; with three classes

This school was founded and is maintained at his own risk by Kornelius Jakob Reimer (son of Jakob Reimer, Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld; graduate of the Halbstadt Secondary School under Unruh and Moliarov, so frequently referred to in this work); Reimer is "foster father" and general director of the school.

Faculty:

1) Miss Katharina K. Reimer (daughter of the above), teacher of

religion; was an elementary school teacher for many years; then a missionary in India; has an elementary school teaching certificate.

2) Miss Lydia Nikolaievna Gorinovitsch, graduate of an eight-class advanced secondary school.

3) Miss Lydia Ivanovna Tomaschevskaia, same as above.

4) Music is taught by organist Johann Gustav Rempel.

Other girls' schools are being formed.

C. The Halbstadt Mennonite Middle School, or Business School §357

This school was founded and is supported by the Mennonite School Society. In its early days it was a private vocational school; but since these schools in the country are extremely limited in their liberty of movement and in their rights, and because the Ministry of Commerce allows a large measure of independence and extensive rights to the schools under its jurisdiction, it was decided to change the school from a vocational to a business school. This change demanded that the school add one senior class (eighth) and a few special business courses to the curriculum (but all the obligatory disciplines of the former school were to remain). The school was renamed "The Business School of the Mennonite Educational Society." In keeping with the statutes the school has the four senior basic classes of an eight-class school of business, and a preparatory class which meets the requirements set by the conventional four-class plus preparatory class school of this type. The purpose of the preparatory class is to prepare the graduates of the secondary schools for enrollment in class five (really, the first one). This preparatory or "fourth" class will enroll any student who has a secondary school diploma without requiring an entrance examination from him. Thus a working relationship is established between the secondary schools and the business school. Because the business school meets the same entrance requirements of the universities that must be met by the state schools of business and the fully qualified vocational schools, the Mennonite school system finally has an actual point of contact with the state-run universities.[66] Two modern languages are obligatory: German and French, or, according to the students' choices, English. Immediate entry to a university is not possible for any student having completed only a secondary school except if he is a graduate of an advanced secondary school; consequently, graduates of the schools of business can enter university only after completing an external entrance examination—a very difficult one at that, and a factor which is a considerable hindrance to our young people who are studying. The rights of the teachers and students of this school are fully equal to those of the

state schools of this type.

Presently (December 1910) the school consists of three classes: the preparatory class of two sections (IVa and IVb); a fifth and sixth basic class. The seventh and eighth classes are to be opened in the next two school years. The institute has dormitory facilities. The enrollment is 124. The esteem in which the school is held proves the necessity to add a fourth parallel class. Most of the students are Mennonites. The institution is thus absolutely timely. Administration is arranged as follows: 1) a "pedagogical committee"—the faculty plus one representative of the executive committee under the chairmanship of the director; 2) "a supervisory commission" (executive) elected at the general meeting of the society. Members on this committee include the director and a representative of the faculty. The director is chosen by the supervisory commission and his appointment is confirmed by the Ministry of Commerce. The director chooses the faculty and presents them to the Ministry of Commerce through the supervisory commission. The chairman of the executive committee becomes the head of all, and the members of his committee are approved by the Minister. The present chairman is Jakob Jakob Suderman—Apanlee.

Following is a list of the present (December 1910) faculty:

1) Peter Johann Wiens (see above "Ohrloff Secondary School"), director; teacher of mathematics.

2) Benjamin Heinrich Unruh, teacher of religion and German; graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and the Halbstadt pedagogical class as well as the Basel Evangelical Seminary; student of the Basel Advanced Secondary School and licentiate of theology of the University of Basel; has the teaching certificate for German for secondary schools.

3) Ssergei Ssergeievitsch Astrov, teacher of Russian; graduate of the Russian Orthodox Academy in Kiev; candidate for a theology degree.

4) Abram Abram Friesen, teacher of natural history; graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and of the advanced higher secondary school in Ekaterinoslav, as well as of the natural history faculty of the New Russian University of Odessa.

5) Peter Peter Letkeman, teacher of the science of commerce; graduate of the Halbstadt Secondary School, of the Kharkov School of Business, and of the St. Petersburg Polytechnic Institute.

6) Charles Frederic Fournier, teacher of French; previous Russian and foreign education.

7) Mrs. Amy Evelina Sudermann, teacher of English and art;

graduate of the College of Preceptors and holder of an English diploma in art.

8) Max Ferdinand Pohl, teacher of singing and physical education; graduate of the Berlin Academy of Church Music.

D. The Village Schools §358

It would have been appropriate to have begun the history of our school system with a discussion of the village schools, or actually, the public schools. However, these schools had no "history." There was no progressive development before the formation of the higher schools; at this time, rational, educational ideas on training and established community standards began to circulate among teachers and others interested in education. At least from the first or second year of its existence, every village had a local school with some kind of arrangements and some kind of "schoolmaster." In those times, in most of the German-speaking areas, people believed that any one who could read fairly well, could write reasonably and clearly, and could also do arithmetic of sorts (a desired ability), could teach. These three skills were considered absolutely necessary, and this fact cannot be overestimated. A teacher could easily be found: he could be some "travelling young fellow who had just cut across the fields"; he could be a neighbor in the village, perhaps even an artisan in need of some extra money. Everything we know about the schools of the Chortitza and Molotschna colonies in the first decades comes to us by oral tradition, and is often of anecdotal nature. The genial Johann Cornies, writing his satiric treatise *The School at X* to show the teachers who were in his charge after 1843 how a school is not to be run, effectively caricatures the conditions existing in numerous schools by comparison with the few that were model schools. Thus, instead of presenting a history of the village schools we offer this sad account of the mismanaged village school. We may consider the inclusion of the quotation either as a well-meant exaggeration, or as an unsparing portrait. As in every satire of life meant for the didactic purposes of changing human society for the better, our first reaction to the writing is laughter, but the tears flow soon after (Gogol!). Johann Cornies sent his teachers the following "document" (according to Franz Isaak's *Molotschna Mennoniten*).

The School at X

". . . the school master is discovered sitting at a table in the very room of the miserable house which he, his wife, and his family occupy as living quarters. He wears a white linen dressing-gown; his head is decked with a nightcap. Frequently, he has his pipe clenched between his teeth. An array of smudged and grimy books, papers, and all sorts of

instruments of punishment covers the table. Surrounding him we find the students who assume all manner of postures. There is no proper division into classes according to ability and rate of progress. Saws, planes, spanners, and other wood-working tools and household gadgets hang on the walls of the unventilated, gloomy room Around the oven hang old socks, trousers, and other articles of clothing. The infant is crying in its crib so the schoolmaster asks one of the girls to rock the baby. A hen with its chicks accompanied by a few pigeons wanders in and out between the feet of the school children, who are, naturally, very much distracted by all the commotion surrounding them. In fact, no orderly instruction exists in this school. On the spur of the moment the schoolmaster changes from one subject to another, choosing according to his whim. He knows nothing at all about lesson preparation. He reads no helpful material for his own improvement. His entire library consists of one book of family devotions dating from the seventeenth century, a few fairytale books, and one ' Happy Arithmetic ' workbook. And because the schoolmaster has no skills to arouse, much less hold the students' attention, these find no pleasure in studying but waste their time in a thousand dallyings. The schoolmaster blusters, curses, scolds, and bellows. He punishes students by having them kneel on hard peas or wood. He ties ' donkey ears ' around the necks of some, administers punches to the heads of others, slaps mouths, and so on. And he dares to call such behavior exercising proper strictness and necessary discipline. The teaching material is dealt with as follows: at first letters of the alphabet and spelling are taught; however, both are approached in such a dry manner that the children are bored very soon. Children must learn to bear this subject for two or three years. The younger children learn nothing else except to drone out the Lord's Prayer, a few family prayers, and the ten commandments. They do this by rote without any understanding before and after classes. Then reading is undertaken, a major exertion for the children who drag the reading along without any intonation, or meaningful pauses. They lack all sense of value or purpose. Since almost every student reads from a different book, the difficulty to teach reading is doubled. One after the other each child must appear before the schoolmaster to recite the assignment. With this method each student gets only two or three minutes of instruction; the rest of the school day is wasted for him. Writing actually is merely drawing the letters of the alphabet, arithmetic means to recopy mechanically the examples which the schoolmaster has demonstrated. Only the boys take both writing and arithmetic, and even they, because they learn no fundamentals and see no future application for what they study, soon forget what they have been shown. When memorization is required, those students receive recognition who can rattle off their assignment

perfectly and completely. To explain the subject matter which is to be learned is beyond the schoolmasters capability—it's all Greek to him.

March 5, 1846. The chairman: Johann Cornies"

If Cornies still found it necessary in 1846 to paint such a ghastly portrait in order to warn and shock the teachers, conditions of the village educational system must long have been deplorable indeed!

§359 We know nothing at all about the first few decades of the

I. Chortitza District

We have no old, handwritten materials available covering the first period of the colony schools in this area. An aged contemporary kindly offers the following information from his own memory and from hearsay. With thanks we use his material freely in the following:

1) Johann Peters[67]

This gentleman taught for 39 years: in Neuendorf 1830-47; in Einlage 1847-61; and in Neu-Osterwick 1861-69. Except for a village school education, he was self-taught, and he was an extraordinarily capable man. Through eager self-study he had achieved such status among his colleagues that he came to the attention of the Supervisory Commission. The commission demanded that the more ambitious village teachers assemble on specific Saturdays to be instructed by Peters in school subjects with which they were only slightly or not at all familiar, and to be guided by him into adopting the most efficient methods to instruct such materials. Besides, Peters was required to inspect schools from time to time, probably to ascertain if and how the instruction he had given was being applied. Peters was an outstanding mathematician. He owned important volumes on mathematics, indeed, some of them hand-written copies. He also had managed to obtain a two-volume dictionary for which he had paid at least a third of his yearly salary. [Teachers of today—take note!] He was a model of punctuality, neatness, and industry, and spared no effort in trying to develop similar qualities in his students. In addition, he offered systematic instruction in Bible history, applied science, and singing according to ciphered notation. According to the notions of those days, Peters possessed a considerable library, many volumes of which were hand-written copies. A large "Mennonite chest" filled with books of this sort was totally destroyed during the huge conflagration of 1846 in Osterwick.

2) David Hausknecht

He was a private tutor[68] in Einlage in the thirties of the previous century. Hausknecht was a Swiss according to the statements attributed to my authority (our honored informant). He possessed sound

pedagogical knowledge, and had higher, or at least, middle school education. This pedagogue must have had extraordinary ability to excite his students during instruction because when they spoke of him it was with enthusiasm and with the assertion that his students excelled among the student population of Einlage. I[69] have known several. They were leading men of the congregation mostly because of a thorough village school education. In his time, Hausknecht followed an educational method involving vivid illustrations [probably he had been a student or was a follower of Pestalozzi]. One hears of visual aids and other similar materials being used. Being a lover of nature, he took his students on hikes in the surrounding area to acquaint them with the flora and fauna of their own district. Even the skies were not neglected. During the winter he, together with his students, built snow forts, organized proper sieges and defences, and by this kind of participation became the very soul of the whole school. He was a "schoolmaster," a teacher—through and through. He must have been a devout man as well, and it is said that he belonged to the Pietists.

3) Jakob Koop

As a man and as a teacher Jakob Koop was original and individualistic. For forty-two years he taught the children of Chortitza Island "customs and insights." Apart from his impetuous manner he was through and through a follower of Heinrich Franz, and a pioneer of timely instruction who saw both to the outer and the inner development of his school. What he had gained under Franz' teaching he introduced into the classroom and worked with such determination and skillful originality that others were forced to admire him. He practiced systematic language instruction in German as well as in Russian. He taught geography, singing according to ciphered notation, and a sensible arithmetic. These were all new subjects to which the "Islanders" reacted with "mixed feelings"; however, they allowed their young and energetic teacher to have full sway. And they did well by him: their school maintained first place among the village schools for decades. Teacher Koop also enjoyed the unlimited trust of the congregation. For the entire period of his teaching on the island he held the chancery office of the village mayor. [This is uncommon for Mennonite teachers. If they do fill this office they do so voluntarily and by agreement with the mayor.] The mayor found him to be almost indispensable as an advisor. When he died in 1898, his students—and this group comprised most of the villagers of the island—felt the loss keenly and mourned him deeply. Koop belonged by religious conviction to our mystics [compare the above with Section 62, c].

4) Kornelius Huebert

Kornelius Huebert was Koop's schoolmate. He was the teacher in

Schoenwiese from 1856 to 1878 (79?). This man, too, cut new trails leading to sound pedagogical principles of instruction in schools. Prominent Russian pedagogues of the sixties and seventies were his associates; namely Uschinsky, Baranov, Ievtuschevsky, Baron Korf, and others. He knew them so thoroughly that he was able to apply their methodical instruction techniques when he taught Russian and arithmetic. In the memory of the Schoenwiese citizens, Huebert's era as schoolmaster is an epoch marked by a lively move upward in education.

§360 Of the students of Heinrich Epp we mention only a few outstanding ones: Jakob Klassen, who was already mentioned as teacher at the secondary school and at the girls' school, taught from 1867 (with interruption of a few years because of illness). Heinrich Harder, who died in 1898, was a teacher in Schoenhorst for twenty-five years. He was a man of "a clear mind and of a good heart." "His students loved him, and he was highly esteemed by all the village folk." Abraham Penner was the teacher in Kronstal for thirty years (from 1877). At present he owns a steam-powered mill in Nikopol and is the leading minister of the Mennonite Church there. Heinrich Epp was teacher in Michaelsburg since 1878. Michaelsburg is located on the "grand-duke-land." At present he teaches religion and German in the secondary school in Nikolaipol (Iasykovo). He is a minister. Peter Johann Penner, since 1872 the teacher in Burwalde and in other villages. He taught for two years in the model school and since 1892 teaches at the secondary school. He is a minister. David Epp (son of the secondary teacher and church elder Heinrich Epp) has taught since 1878 in Osterwick and Rosental and since 1899 in Ekaterinoslav at the Mennonite school there. He also teaches religion at the business school. He is a minister. (See "Publications.")

All these and other "Epp disciples" can be identified as first being the enthusiastic followers of Kehr; namely, they were "Kehrians," and the first ones of the Chortitza District who, together with P. M. Riediger, developed and followed a rational pedagogical course. In this respect Wilhelm Penner also belongs to this group (Riediger and Penner—see above "Secondary Schools.")

After Epp, the following, among the students of Riediger, Penner and Klassen, may be named as rational pedagogues: Gerhard Loewen in Einlage, minister; and David Rempel, minister, and teacher in Osterwick since 1880.

We do not pretend to have given a complete description of the Chortitza elementary school nor to have given sufficient attention to the merit of the teaching faculty. We are not sufficiently informed to discuss the early days, and with respect to the most recent times, we have been

strongly advised by those whom we cannot ignore not to give a value judgment of personalities now active, in particular of teachers and ministers! However, some evaluating must be done.

§361

II. The Molotschna District

In the description so far the first decades of the Molotschna and Chortitza schools have been considered jointly. We recall that the "shocking portrait" of *The School in X* was given especially for the teaching faculty of Molotschna in 1846. But not all teachers nor all schools were like that ugly example.

In Section 62 we have mentioned a teacher of the twenties, Abram Dyck of Pastva, of whose activities as a teacher we are ignorant, but from whose letters we may assume a developed personality and sincere Christian. We can scarcely think of him in the setting of *The School at X*. His writing is correct according to the orthography acceptable at that time. We know more about Jakob Braeul of Rudnerweide (see above—"Halbstadt Secondary School"). Around 1830 his school was so outstanding that Faddeiev gave it equal status with the Society School of Ohrloff in his assumptions regarding the proposed intermediate schools, especially for the teaching of Russian, as we mentioned earlier. According to the traditions about him which still were told in my youth (except that Faddeiev mentions), he was a highly outstanding "schoolmaster" of his day who was spoken of with respect and honor. His length of tenure in Rudnerweide is unknown. Besides his ability in teaching Russian he was famous for his teaching of arithmetic, singing, and penmanship. "Block-lettering," drawing, and painting were practiced especially in the making of small pictures, and greeting cards (for Christmas, New Year, etc.), which also were presented to the students as rewards for industry and good behavior. (Braeul really had artistic talent.) But he also had ability in technical drawing (drafting) and produced designs for clock faces, for the huge Dutch wall clocks which even now are manufactured among the Mennonites of Russia as household furniture. He also drew plans for chests (large trunks), the major piece of furniture of the "big room" (living-room) of those days, and drew blueprints for clothes closets, corner cabinets, brick cabinets, four-poster beds and stately desks for the living room. Thus he supplemented his income during the long summer vacation. In the same way he was engaged in bookbinding. And all this was considered fitting for a teacher. This attitude has remained until recent times, for many a thorough pedagogue had to support a large family on a small salary and so earned a second income in this way. And many an aspirant to the teaching profession has studied teaching methods under him (see above "Chortitza Secondary School," and following under "Heinrich Richert"

regarding the student helpers, especially the student teachers) during the winter, and learned these other practical skills from him in the summer. One of Braeul's most outstanding students was Isaak Peters (often mentioned above), a teacher in Fuerstenau and Sparrau for many years. Nothing is known to us about the studies of a certain teacher Penner, older than Peters, who taught in Konteniusfeld for many years, but we do, indeed, remember that he was a leading teacher among his colleagues and that he was an extremely devout man. In fact, "unfortunately a bit too pious." Through his many years of service he has left permanent influences in Konteniusfeld. A praiseworthy competitive spirit manifested itself between the Sparrau and Konteniusfeld schools. Doubtlessly, there were many outstanding teachers of that time in the villages of Chortitza and Molotschna comparable to the ones here mentioned, and who are remembered with gratitude by their now-aged former students, both male and female. But we are unable to supply any more details. We know only that the Gnadenfeld village school was a teacher training school (without being called that) for many a pedagogue because of the thoroughness of its teachers (mentioned before): Heinrich Franz, Peter Neufeld, Abram Ediger, and because of the genial inspiration of these teachers by the Elder Franz W. Lange (see above—Sec. 48.) If a few meager notations are reliable, Lange, who immigrated in 1837, and then became a minister in 1838, and an elder in 1841, was a teacher in Steinbach for some time. The Steinbach school belonged to a "Gnadenfeld School Society" which at one time ceased to exist but was revived in the fifties. Later, before Peter Neufeld's time, Franz Dyck, who has been referred to earlier in the section on the Ohrloff Secondary School, excelled in Steinbach as a teacher especially because of his brilliant teaching of Russian. A non-conformist school teacher was Peter Siemens (see above, Sec. 196, k), who had immigrated into Russia from Prussia at fourteen years of age, but who achieved such a knowledge of Russian that he passed the Russian examination for teachers of that time (the seventies) after he first passed the Mennonite examination of the Society (see above and below—"School Administration"). For a number of years from about 1862 he was teaching in Muensterberg, Neu-Hoffnung (as teacher on a Russian semstvo), in Alexanderwohl, and then taught privately until his death in Lichtfelde to 1906. A.A. Neufeld had been a student of his for a number of years.

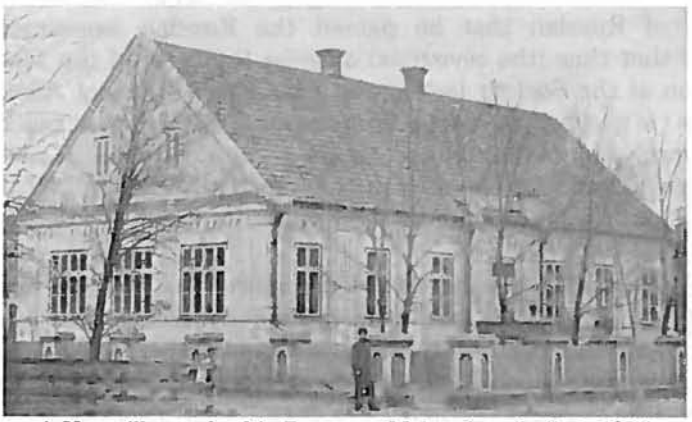
§362 From the period of the sixties and seventies and on we should mention Peter Holzrichter in Rosenort, and Johann Braeul in Ohrloff (son of the above-mentioned Jakob Braeul and father of J. Braeul, the Ohrloff Secondary School teacher). Johann Braeul taught for forty years in Ohrloff (the longest period), Waldheim and Schoensee. Next to



a) Old village school in Margenau-Molotschna (built before the time of Cornies).



b) Present village school in Margenau (in the style of Cornies).



c) New village school in Rosenort, Molotschna (built in 1895).

Kornelius Unruh, Braeul was one of the first and most thorough "Kehrians." In mentioning Holzrichter, besides noting his generally very successful teaching, and his full cooperation with reforms of the seventies and his participation in working with the commission for these reforms, particular attention must be focused on his excellent instruction of Russian. He belongs to those extraordinary Molotschna teachers who learned Russian step by step with their students, according to the established, systematized curriculum, keeping only a few paces ahead of the students. With all respect, the same can be said to a greater or lesser degree of all the teachers mentioned, or yet to be mentioned, in this paragraph (section 362). Further to be noted are the contemporaries of the above two; namely, Abram Goerz (for more details see below under "School Administration" and "Clergy"), who excelled in practical and effective instruction of Russian during his rather short teaching period in Altonau. Until 1872 the colleague of Holzrichter and Braeul was P. Siemens of Muensterberg (mentioned above). Siemens, Goerz and others evoked special attention because of their enthusiastic united study of Russian during the summer vacations, where Goerz, being the most fluent, was especially helpful in teaching the others. Stimulating them, working along with them, but mainly paving the way for them was the Blumenort teacher Kornelius Unruh, who was a member of the group for a few years. Goerz' successor in Altonau was Franz Peter Isaak, who distinguished himself in the reform movement of the seventies as a member of the commission and as an expert in the schools, and through his lively instruction of Russian. Similarly, his brother Abram Isaak in Rueckenau must be mentioned. Outstanding in the same period was the Morgenau teacher, at that time David Gerhard Duerksen, who—one almost would like to say "unfortunately!"—allowed the strong and beloved "minister urge" in his nature finally to overrule the "teacher urge", though the latter had been his life for 19 years (see further—"Clergy"). Heinrich P. Unruh, the present elder in Halbstadt and an active committee member of the school board for the last three decades, is also in the vanguard of this group. We are not in a position to name all of the thorough teachers among the "old-timers"; as little as we are able to name the "ancients." As far as we know, all these men were self-taught. They included Minister Heinrich J. Janzen, Steinbach-Gnadenfeld (see further "School Administration"). As a teacher training institute the Halbstadt Secondary School does not seem to have been very important if we judge from the performance of the men who come to mind and who were the talk of society as exceptional teachers! Except for the men of old: Peter Fast, Daniel Fast, Peter Neufeld, and a few others from the middle period of the Halbstadt Secondary School we are not acquainted with any persons who were at all important; Bernhard Harder is the exception.

§363 Special notice must be made of the following two men of whom we will give more details later under "Clergy": among the Molotschna teachers instructing during the seventies, Bernhard Harder, and Heinrich Richert. Harder and Richert are prototypes of the Russian Mennonite "school teacher ministers"; in this case the former is more prominent as minister than teacher, and the latter is more prominent as teacher. The life story of Richert reveals the general portrait of our good teachers of that period after Cornies and prior to the second reform period (under the Molotschna Mennonite School Board). Within the limits of possibility it is an ideal of this life to be fully sincere and well-rounded in experience rather than to be highly gifted with mental ability alone (Richtert was a gifted person, but he was not a genius). And so, dozens of teachers' homes were unpretentious, simple, but still rather cultural. This we remember from visits to teachers in those days. How simple, yet how refined was the living-room of the cramped teacherage! What an educational "aura" surrounded the corner cabinet with its dozen or so carefully selected books! Teachers such as Richert in the Molotschna and Chortitza areas contributed in those early years, and certainly by 1846, to the basic philosophy of idealism which Cornies presented to his teachers in the treatise *The School at A* (see below) as a contrast to the frightful scenes of *The School at X* (as a model for his idealism Richert looked to Lichtfelde, we believe, to the father of Franz Dyck, a much older school teacher). These men labored quietly and loyally, but only the names of a few have been preserved in our traditions. As far as they had become godly men they all lived for God. Honor to their memory!

§364 The teachers of our day cannot be taken into more detailed personal consideration for a number of reasons. In all our older and more consolidated teaching areas a number of men are active who are worthy to be colleagues of the above mentioned best "fathers"; however, not all members of the present faculties can be said to meet the degree of loyalty and devotion to the task which the "fathers" demonstrated. All the present teachers are much better educated than their predecessors were, but only a few groups of the extraordinary ones are so industrious in deepening and increasing their freely provided education, as one might say, as those self-taught old masters were. These superior teachers are, nevertheless, the joy and hope not only of the Mennonite scholar, but also of everyone who has the spiritual and cultural welfare of our youth—"the hope of future days"—at heart.

The competent teachers in the present generation of teachers have demonstrated their pedagogical and cultural far-sightedness and their energy by founding, among other things, the Molotschna Mennonite

Teachers' Society. A few years ago they added the Chortitza Mennonite Teachers' Society.[70] These two societies supplanted to some degree the motivating force which was provided in its good time by the Mennonite school boards, especially in Molotschna. These boards now are crippled in their influence. The societies contribute a great deal to general and pedagogical higher education of the teachers through maintaining common libraries, and through conducting trial lessons which are to improve the teaching methods. They also read papers and conduct discussions at their conventions. May the spirit of our best "school fathers" more and more take possession of all our schools—and where necessary, regain possession. May we be ever more inspired by the spirit of piety, sound attitudes of citizenship, and enthusiasm for true education (see above—Voth, Heese, and Franz) in the light and power of the Spirit from above—the "Teacher"—who leads into all truth!

§364(2) In the interests of impartiality and completeness, we must make room, unfortunately, for statements of some misgivings. An old minister and devotee of Heinrich Epp writes about the impression he has of a threatening danger. We trust that the honored writer of the letter (who shared with me, the historian, his misgivings before this paragraph went to press) is too pessimistic and biased. We now offer a paraphrase of the letter:

At a certain point in time an entirely new attitude invaded our school. In former years the dominant idea—held emotionally by some, rationally by others—in the work of the school was to offer that which was considered most necessary in the life of a person: to live in the fellowship and grace of God, and to inherit everlasting salvation. Then, however, the separation of religious moral training and school education was promoted. The teaching of religion was relegated more to the place of being only a necessary supplement to general education rather than being an integral part of it. No special explanations to students were needed: they were all soon aware that "education" had now become the password, and that "education" makes men free. When, on a field trip, the students of a certain school sang a song that had words of double meaning, one of the teachers remarked: "our school is emancipating itself." A teacher in a graduation address drew the students' attention to the hard times that lay ahead—hard times that they could not avoid experiencing, and then he directed them to emulate the firmness and resourcefulness demonstrated by certain characters in a well-known drama. A minister speaking to a fellow-clergyman, who was a friend of the speaker, remarked about the fact that the speaker had not directed the attention of the students to the Helper in every need. To this the friend of the speaker had replied that the speaker was not the teacher of

religion and so was not obligated to shift to the religious area. If, then, a minister sought to justify such a separation between education and religious advice, how much more would the younger teachers, who do not have a thorough insight, accept such a separation, and moreover, follow the notion that "education" alone is entirely adequate for training, and that religious instruction is merely an unnecessary appendage! And the things I have mentioned here are continuing to develop. It is always detrimental when education in the public school is biased totally in favor of the secular. We must, however, say as well that "there is still a remnant of good in Judah." The many religious influences in the advice from the parental home, the school, and the church may not be so summarily and easily disregarded. These influences oppose the irreligious trends in a positive way. And so there are still those teachers who demonstrate their religious attitudes. But even for these to bear witness is becoming difficult, for one does not really expose oneself to scoffers. Sometimes the future looks dark to me. I have battled for many years, and I will continue to do so and trust in the Lord of the Kingdom.

So far the thoughts of our generous correspondent. Two mortal enemies have constantly threatened our Mennonitism: dull "orthodox" (but not truly believing) obscurantism, hating education; and, superficial and pragmatic rationalism and deism, which ascribe to education the be-all and end-all. The former enemy is like a swamp, and we have wallowed long enough in this nauseating mess (see above ##36, 59, 61, 61(2), 69c, etc.). And some of our brethren in America among the "Old Mennonites" and some among those from Russia are still wallowing in it. The latter enemy is like a barren, sterile desert. Mennonite congregations in Holland and in North-West Germany have lost and are losing their vitality in this arid desert, and have succumbed or are dying, slowly but surely![71] Our attitude to education and faith has been adequately demonstrated in the previous sections. We firmly believe that living faith and true knowledge are two forms of the same divine truth. Faith may be regarded as the soul; education as the body—or, as body and garment. Because our fathers in general despised education especially for their ministers, they sank gradually into the "swamp," and rescue came only through the believers of those churches and circles who valued both faith and education highly: through Moravian Brethren, Pietists, and so on. For us who battle for the faith there remains only one alternative: to win "education" over to the Christian cause and place it into the service of Christ just as Moses and Daniel utilized the "wisdom of the Egyptians and Chaldeans" for the service of Jehovah. Let us inspire our youth in our area of influence for education and art, but let us teach them to know Jesus as "most glorious of all" and as the "fullness of all that is; in whom all fullness dwells."

Let us bear witness to the fact that in Him we have all joy and vitality of life, as well as all comfort in life and death, the basis for all genuine quality in our social, cultural, intellectual, spiritual and moral activities. Let us be filled with the joy of faith in the forgiveness of, and the battle against, sin. And let us be equipped with all knowledge and information so that at the cultural level we can measure up to the "education enthusiasts" who believe that our critically unexamined Jesus of the Gospels cannot stand against the arsenal of the sciences. Let us be united, we who believe and know what we have in Jesus, and let us not waste our powers in opposing each other about questions of honor and right regarding this or that denomination, or about the correctness of this or that perception and traditional or ritual question. Let us strive that we, too, may proclaim: "We know that we have come from death unto life because we love the brethren" (John 3:14). Let us be tolerant of the seeker, when we are of those who have found, and let us love in him the "brother in hope"; but—without hiding our insight, even at the risk of being scoffed at. Let us demonstrate humility and self-judgment, and let us rise in the power that is mighty in the weak. Let us lay aside all tearfully sweet or sour moods, this caricature of piety, and let us free ourselves of all affectations of piety and all self-praise as of a caste system, yet knowing full well what "the world" means in the sense of enmity with God. But let us also realize that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son. . ." to save it. Let us strive to rate among the first in thorough work done as it is related to our knowledge and profession; and let us be among those who cry to God night and day in prayer! Therefore, you believers among the educated—let us rise to the task and do battle not only against "obscurantism" and bigotry, but also against a Christless, sick scientism, and libertine secularization!! Our ideal is a culturally happy, knowledgeable, personal and social, thorough-going Christianity, the "godliness" that is useful in all things and "fit for all good purposes," and which has the "promise for this life and for the life to come."

In this we shall conquer!

Only a school of this nature is of any use to us. We abhor the swamp and the desert!

Statistics §365

The number of schools of the Mennonites in Russia is not below 400: intermediate educational institutes for men and women, village schools and schools on estates (village and estate schools were co-educational). The number of all teachers (only a few dozen were females) of the Mennonite confession in schools of all categories including those male and female teachers who did private tutoring in the family unit is at least

500. Teachers who teach at the state middle schools, or at other institutes of this category which enjoy the same privileges as the state schools, do not number more than a dozen. There are relatively few multi-class village schools: in the Chortitza region (including Schoenwiese)—9 of 17; of these two are three-class (Neuendorf and Schoenhorst) and one is four-class (Einlage). In the Halbstadt region—9 of 31 of which one is three-class (Neu-Halbstadt "Model School"). In the Gnadenfeld region—6 of 28. We have already mentioned (*#247*) the two four-class village schools of the Volost Velikokniashesk in the Kuban; also a multi-class village school was located at the Olgino ("Templer") Colony in the province area Stavropol. Especially to be noted is the four-class "school for the poor" on the estate Beresovka near Davlekanovo, Province of Ufa. It was founded and financed by Franz Klassen and is presently under the administration of the Minister Jakob Johann Martens as its only patron. (Under "Institutions of Charity" we discuss in detail the four and five-class Maria School for the Deaf Mutes in Tiege as well as the other works of charity.) Besides those named above there are very few multi-class village schools in existence. The highest enrollment in the single-class school is 80. This, of course, is abnormal and is hardly motivated by the poverty of the community. In the schools on the estates and enlarged estates there are frequently no more than half a dozen students. The average salary of the village school teachers is about 600 rubles if we convert the food they receive into money. In addition they receive a teacherage with heating materials, or they receive an extra allowance for heat. The salary of the Ohrloff Secondary School teachers is about average for all secondary teachers (see above). The highest salary is paid to the principal of the Chortitza Secondary School. He receives 1600 rubles and a teacherage.

§366 Concerning the educational level of the teachers of the village and estate schools, fifteen per cent teach without a certificate (secondary students who have not graduated from a pedagogical course or who may not even have completed the basic classes, or they are self-taught). These teachers are active mainly in the new settlements, villages, hamlets, and larger estates being established year after year by the dozen. And the activity of these teachers is of short duration if they do not exert themselves sufficiently to sit for the state public school teachers' examination (the curriculum includes three classes of the vocational secondary school without a foreign language, algebra, and natural history; even geometry is obligatory only for those who wish to earn the right to teach in the two-class schools of the Ministry (see above Davlekanovo); added to this is a short program for pedagogical training). By far the larger number of teachers has village school teaching certificates. Only a good half of them has a full pedagogical

education received in the pedagogical classes of Halbstadt and Chortitza. The others are secondary school students who have completed only the basic classes (sometimes not even that), or who have graduated from a lower middle school class. Others are self-taught who were able to earn the above mentioned teaching certificate in spite of having no pedagogical or secondary school training. This is a laudable feat especially for someone who is not a native Russian, since the candidate has to submit to both a written and oral examination. (As we know, the graduates of the pedagogical classes in Halbstadt and Chortitza must sit for the same examination at the state schools.) Because the Mennonite candidate who succeeds in this examination generally knows German better than Russian (he must write four assignments in Russian, just like any Russian national), our village school teachers who have a teacher's certificate can be evaluated as having at least a little "higher teacher training." And the level of those who are self-taught is certainly not to be despised when it is remembered that, added to the above, the candidates hoping to achieve teaching positions instructing religion and German must sit for an examination in these subjects set (at least in the Molotschna) by the school board,[72] indeed, administered by this body under the direction of the teachers of religion and German in the pedagogical classes.[72] Candidates who are self-taught are usually people of superior energy. (Often the examination in religion and German for the self-educated is waived and instead a certificate is granted on the basis of temporary services rendered.) Of course, the best prepared ones are the most industrious and conscientious graduates of the pedagogical classes. Naturally, it is to be desired that the education of the latter also become more intense (as demonstrated above by pointing out the quality of the teachers carrying on our only systematic instruction in religion and who are—to a large extent—candidates for the ministry). The education of the secondary school teachers has been discussed before when we examined the personalities of the teachers of the four oldest secondary schools. The same has been done regarding the teachers of those newer schools which we merely mentioned. Similarly, the teachers in the intermediate schools for women. Up to the present not more than three Mennonite teachers with completed university training have been appointed (that is, of all teachers) at all secondary schools, and at this very moment (1910) only one is actively engaged in teaching (the principal of the Chortitza Secondary School)! Most of today's teachers have a midde-school education and either private or area certificates. Some are energetic and industrious workers (usually showing thorough competence) who after completion of their pedagogical training have spent a few years as village school teachers and then sat for an examination in one or more of the curriculum subjects. The number of secondary school teachers who complete a teachers' institute is steadily

increasing. They are mostly graduates of the pedagogical courses, who were teachers for a time and then enrolled in an institute of teacher training (mainly in St. Petersburg). Naturally, taking this educational route is to be highly commended, especially when the person following it was a village school teacher for at least three to five years. It is only for the secondary schools (soon, it is to be hoped, to become four-class schools) with a pedagogical course that one might desire men as principals, who after a course of study as described above also achieve graduation from a university; and these, because of the ethical-moral educational problems of the moment, should be Mennonite youth. A pedagogue strange to our faith and language can hardly be expected to understand the psychology of our young people. With a few exceptions, the religion teachers of the intermediate schools for both men and women are graduates of secondary schools, and have subsequently completed their studies, or at least have enrolled for a few years, in foreign evangelical seminaries. Speaking generally, for the teaching of German most of them possess a private tutor's certificate or diploma. The majority are ministers. Only the Ohrloff Secondary School offers a pension plan. A "support treasury" for the retired teachers is in the formative stages.

§367 In attempting to establish the total number of Mennonite children, and young men and women who are studying, we are forced by assumptions we must make because of many individual circumstances, to generalize rather broadly, and to draw comparisons with the total Mennonite population of Russia. The figure should stand roughly at 15,000. A case of a Mennonite child not receiving any education at all would be most unusual. The number of Mennonite students, both male and female, studying at middle and university-level schools in this country would not exceed 200; in foreign countries, 50. Most of these students are in St. Petersburg (Moscow), Ekaterinoslav, Berdiansk, Alexandrovsk, Melitopol, Odessa, and Sevastopol.

E. The School Administration

§368 1. In describing the course of our history in general and the history of our schools in particular it has been necessary to mention the many activities of the school administrative bodies at numerous times. The highest administrative body was the Ministry of Crown Lands until all the colonial schools were placed under the administration of the Ministry of Public Education. The Odessa Supervisory Commission (formerly the trustee office in Ekaterinoslav; for the Volga colonies there was an office [permanent] in Saratov) functioned as a mediating board for the school system as well as for all other colonial affairs. After the Supervisory

Commission was dissolved the administration was taken over for a few years by the Kherson-Bessarabian Crown Lands Administrative Office of Odessa, which was in charge of liquidating the business of the commission. To this new committee were added a few older officials of the former Supervisory Commission. In 1881 the schools of all the "former colonists," now commonly (since 1870) called "land-holding settlers," were placed under the Ministry of Public Education.

§369 2. In matters concerning economics or law enforcement, the schools of the colonists were under the direct administration of the elected officials of the colonies, and of the district and village officials. The rights and duties of supervising and giving leadership in religious training, actually the entire intellectual and pedagogical training area was given over to the clergy of the colony, "the spiritual fathers, pastors, and (for the Mennonites) the spiritual teachers of the people." (See above—*#295*, III.) The elders and ministers of the Mennonite colonies as a total group did precious little in the old days to raise the level of the school system. And how could such raising of standards be possible when we recall our remarks in *##36, 54, 59,* and 61. Everything worthwhile that happened up to 1843 can be credited to individual friends of education (among them a few ministers, too: Elder Bernhard Fast; Peter Neufeld, Rosenort, an intimate friend of Cornies; Peter Isaak; Elder Franz W. Lange and several others) or small groups of people interested in schools (who formed societies) and individual teachers whose intelligence and sparkling personalities appear like lovely stars in a dark sky.

§370 3. In the Molotschna colonies and later also in the Chortitza areas the colonial administration (as we know from *##68* and *69*) transferred the administration of schools to the Agricultural Society in cooperation with the church elders and the colony teachers. This happened in 1843 and the title was then expanded to include ". . . and for raising the standards of the school system." It was self-evident that the supervision of spiritual matters was to remain completely the responsibility of the church elders and teachers, and this arrangement was only correct and just. Of course, Cornies was meant, although his name was not directly stated, when the society gave this assignment. Cornies stands head and shoulders above any past or present hero of our Russian Mennonites. He was also given sweeping powers in Chortitza. We will allow one of his contemporaries and fellow-workers (a secretary, then a teacher), Franz Isaak, to speak (from his *Molotschna Mennoniten*) about the Cornies school era.

". . . in 1843 . . . the government placed the supervision and the

leadership of the entire school system into the hands of the chairman of the Agricultural Society, Johann Cornies . . . because the government . . . recognized in him a man who would be productive in this area, too. When Cornies accepted this important assignment, he attacked the problems of raising the standards of the school system with the usual energy he expended in trying to solve all problems that came under his jurisdiction. No teacher was to be appointed nor transferred without his explicit approval. He was adamant that a transfer of teachers was to be made only if such a transfer implied an improvement in an existing difficult situation. To demonstrate graphically to the villagers and also to the teachers the present low standards of the schools, Cornies sent a description of a deplorable school [see above: *The School at X*] to the village offices on May 5, 1846. The writing described a rather exaggerated situation; at least, it would seem exaggerated to anyone acquainted only with the present standards. However, those who know something of the school conditions in those early days from personal observation, know very well that this description is by no means exaggerated [?!]. . . . But in order to give an illustration to the villagers of how a good school could be conducted, Cornies soon after sent out a second description which was circulated among the village offices. . . .

In the School at A

the room is comfortably dry, well-lighted, and roomy. Even the outer appearance of the building attracts the attention of the traveller and shows its lofty purpose. The classroom is entirely separated from the teacher's living quarters; consequently, the students are in his presence alone. They are properly separated into classes by sex and by ability. They sit at appropriate desks, all in neat rows and all facing the teacher's desk. In clean clothes (as he wants his pupils to dress as well), mannerly, and with a friendly firmness the teacher appears before his class. He oversees them and observes them all. At times he strolls between the rows of desks; very seldom does he sit down in his chair. Constantly active, he tries to keep the children in his charge alert too. They are not disturbed by any outside distractions. Except for a frame in which the timetable is pinned, and a blackboard for the copying down of 'wrong sentences' and a few other things, the white walls are bare. During instruction hours the subjects are dealt with in a seemly order: difficult and easy material is cleverly interchanged. For every hour of instruction the teacher prepares himself carefully and he has studied the available lesson aids for which he spends some of his salary from time to time—money that another teacher might squander in the tavern. Because of these activities he becomes more and more skillful and gains insights. His areas of knowledge expand constantly; each day

he does more good, and at the same time he enlarges on his own advantages.

"When a child makes an error he reminds it in a fatherly, tender manner of the harm it is doing to itself. He warns very earnestly if the reminder is ignored, and when all else fails, he finally punishes by degrees the offender who persists in continually repeating misdemeanors. Very seldom does he use an instrument of punishment and he never punishes to the detriment of the pupil's health or insults his dignity as a human being. Through such training—or more so—through his serious and correct behavior, through his accuracy in all things, and through his lively instruction he wins over the love of his students and conquers their inhibitions. The teacher discusses issues with the students as a friend does. By coming down to their level, one might say, he engages himself with the subjects that the students are to learn. Above all, he makes an effort to excite their interest in the things round about them, and he expands that interest by encouraging the students to verify their conclusions.

"The teacher questions them as if he were ignorant of the answer and would wish to be taught by them. But his questions are so skillfully ordered that the children are gradually led from the known to the unknown, so that they believe they discovered the answers all by themselves. Thus they are led to form convictions on their own about the nature of good and evil. They are trained to think, to discriminate, to judge, to conclude, what is true and what is false, what is certainty and what is superstition. Through this method understanding rather than memory is developed. They gain personal conviction about the truths of religion and about the duties of a member of a congregation—worthwhile knowledge for their future lives.

"To complement this instruction there exists a natural and sensible approach to the teaching of reading. Fluency in the German language is stressed because it is a major subject and is the basis of the instruction on which all reading and listening depends. In order to render the lectures on abstract things more tangible, the teacher uses lively, natural, proper examples available to the children on the spot. He also employs visual aids extensively. The instruction is interwoven with interesting narratives. The children learn songs with easily understood but didactic lyrics and uplifting melodies. Added to all this there is some joint instruction of all classes, guided by one set of books. What is being said to one child is being said to all—all hear the same words. This arouses a competitive spirit and the emotion of noble pride in the students. These are two characteristics through which so much is gained in teaching. And this method fosters these attitudes. Through this

system of teaching, young people gain the greatest benefits that accrue from the ability to write and do arithmetic, for they become convinced that they can make use of these skills for the rest of their lives. This teaching method brings the students to a knowledge of God through natural religion, or through correctly applied intelligence. After that, the story of the Savior follows naturally and they understand the history of His Gospel. Every concept is taken up point by point, made clear, and in all respects made understandable so that mind and heart are developed. Thus the young people are helped to grasp, understand, and remember things. In this way Christian principles and attitudes are planted in the souls of children, so that they will honor and adore the almighty and gracious God, be grateful for His grace, and because of love for Him, make serious resolutions to fulfill His will.

"Instruction such as that given in School A educates each child to the level and insight of which it is capable; the child learns to develop its strengths and finally to play its part in the work of improving society.

"N.B. The fear of God is not developed in children by lectures or abstract explanations; all lengthy analysing and dissecting catechizing can never arouse a truly God-fearing spirit.

"April 6, 1846. The Chairman, Johann Cornies."

"In addition, Cornies presented some general rules for teachers. These dealt with instruction and mangement of children. [The following are some of the most noteworthy ones]:

"1) The first educational experiences the soul undergoes are most important for the future. The normal and undisturbed personality must be supported in its natural development so that it may visibly prosper. (This may be achieved by providing fitting activity, exercising the thought processes, and giving new information.)

"4) Through firmness, one must prevent the development of negative characteristics in children. In this training the teacher should take a patiently enduring attitude so as not to sin against any of his pupils. A degeneration of the child's emotions, an unconquerable barrier to training, an evil preponderance of sinfulness develops if the self-willed child is not brought to its senses at the proper time; if the lazy child is not motivated to action; and if the unruly child is not instructed in practicing proper restraint. The more effervescent energy the child has, the more leadership and firm training it should receive. By their very nature children require diversion, activity, entertainment. . . .

"7) Come to the aid of children by forbidding them things rather than by punishing them, and release them from the chains they are not able to break on their own. . . .

"18) Never disturb children by criticizing or nagging them when they attempt something on their own. Self-effort strengthens body and mind. . . .

"19) If the activity of the children tends to concentrate in one specific area, they should not be forced to another activity contrary to their natural abilities, their emotions, and their inclinations. A man truly owns only what he himself produces. Where there happen to be no inclinations, teachers must be content with less. If one cannot plant oaks, then one must be content with planting modest fruit trees. . . .

"24) Early in his life a student must be taught to work, not according to whim, but according to the nature of the work, the size of the assignment, and the time given him. When it becomes obvious that the student is working in a faulty direction, that he is dissipating his strength, he must be immediately stopped. . . .

"31) The total inner strength of a student is crippled and blunted when pampered only by shallow vocabulary or untimely abstractions. Vocabulary and abstract material must be strengthened by practical perceptual concepts.

"32) A method used to great advantage is to let the more advanced children instruct the neglected ones, or to allow the gifted children to teach in the classroom under the direct supervision of the teacher. . . .

"37 The concepts and impressions of religion must give strength and motivation to all other areas of the curriculum because no man will ever achieve true morality if he does not feel awe, love, and trust toward an unseen Being which he can regard as the shaper of his destiny. For this reason, let everything in the training process be done within the framework of a religious spirit. . . .

"40) Let Jesus be commended to the children at every opportunity. In all aspects of his loving nature He is the greatest friend of children. Train them to become friends of Christ; this gives them the greatest nobility in this world and the next.

"41) If the teacher desires to make learning a joy for his charges, he must show with his entire behavior that he, too, has great joy in teaching.

"47) Girls must learn social customs and the general language of proper deportment earlier. Also, they must develop a certain measure of boldness earlier so that they do not degenerate into childish silliness.

"48) What embarrasses young people most and makes them speak in monosyllables or act like idiots is the becoming aware of their own inadequacies of knowledge and thought. Education, therefore, must raise

them to the level where they can handle themselves comfortably in social situations.

"59) Rewards and punishments should be meted out cautiously and sparingly as seasoning for proper training, so that selfishness and egotism on the one hand, and fear on the other, do not develop, and that the student learns to avoid also the unpunished evil and to love even the unrewarded noble deed.

"88) If the teachers of this region will work according to these regulations, the schools will become institutions for training the body, heart, and mind—indeed, true educational institutions; a blessing for the present and the future."

In 1845 Cornies divided the Molotschna Colony into six school districts, and in January, 1846, he had two representative teachers elected for each district, who could assist him in regulating the system. This meant improving the level of instruction by the preparation of a practical, workable curriculum and time-table. The subject matter taught in the schools follows: 1) the ABCs on the blackboard; 2) syllabification and spelling; 3) reading; Bible reading with proper intonations; 4) orthography and penmanship; 5) arithmetic: the first four rules and the rule of three including fractions; 6) mental arithmetic; 7) singing according to ciphered notation from the hymnary; 8) German language; 9) memorization; 10) letter-writing; 11) introduction to geography from the atlas primer; 12) Bible history [we were taught these in our youth for an hour each morning—1855 to 1862]; geography [?]; nature study and church history [subjects like these were not even mentioned in the village schools of 1860; we knew nothing about these]. Writing according to dictation. Given in Juschanlee on January 26, 1846.

"The school buildings[73] were constructed according to Cornies' specifications; in fact, according to a plan still used today [in Franz Isaak's days, as well as at present in 1910, most school buildings in Molotschna villages dated back to the Cornies era], schools in their outward appearance imply the noble purpose to which they are dedicated, as the *School at A. . . .*"

Proper examinations for teachers belonging to the society were also established in the secondary schools by Cornies and they were supervised later on by himself and the Council of Church Leaders.

As we know, Cornies died in 1848. His successor as chairman and as school inspector was Philipp Wiebe. He had the teachers' representatives assisting him, just as Cornies had done, to inspect all the schools once per year and give him an annual report on each. He worked to improve teachers' salaries and for a more systematic attendance. Teachers called

the roll every day. The lists of attenders and absentees was sent to the society office each month. If there was unjustified absenteeism, the parents were subjected to a monetary fine or were given other forms of punishment (gratis work for the congregation, etc.). Attendance at school was mandatory for every child between six and fourteen. Starting in 1850, yearly "general teachers' conventions" were held in addition to the monthly "special meetings" in the six (or more?) districts. After Wiebe, the most influential man to emerge in the school society was the chairman Peter Schmidt, Jr., of Steinbach (nephew of the founder of Steinbach village, and nephew of the first Molotschna Area Administrator, Klaas Wiens). Under Schmidt's administration the mission of the Agricultural Society declined and finally in 1869 it ended. The teachers mentioned above, Heinrich Richert, P. Holzrichter, and others of the fifties to seventies were a fruit of the Cornies' era and its continuation.

The importance of the Agricultural Society for the Chortitza colonies is only sparingly mentioned in the tradition and in the written documents, as far as we have been informed (see above: "Secondary and Village Schools").

4. The Mennonite School Boards §371

The importance of the "Society" in its relationship with the schools suffered a gradual decline under Schmidt's administration: an authority that has rested solely on the strong personality of one man cannot expect to continue as powerfully when that personality is replaced by officialdom. With Cornies' death, the influence of the institutions created specifically for him gradually declined. In 1869 the committee in Odessa agreed to P. Schmidt's request to relieve him of the duties as supervisor of the schools (a request made because Schmidt was ill). In that same year meetings were held in Odessa, as we have previously reported, between the colonial deputy officers, under the chairmanship of Governor-General Kozebue, and the president of the committee, Ettinger. How the idea for the creation of school boards for the colonial groups was born is unknown to this writer. Probably the first ones took office in Grossliebental near Odessa, and in Sarata in Bessarabia. In the Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed colonies, the case was simple from the viewpoint of the administration: a few of the more wealthy and intelligent men, who were known to be friends of schools and who had influence in their regional and village communities, together with the educated clergy and pastors, were very quickly organized into official school boards. In any event, legally, and by virtue of their being considered equal in rank and entirely competent by the decision-making gentlemen of the committee and the Imperial Ministry of Crown Lands,

and because of their educational status, the clergy already had extensive powers in school matters.

§372 But was this also true of the Mennonites? *De jure*, the clergy had the same competence as the Catholic and Protestant clergy, but their educational level and their insights into educational matters as a whole were very well known to the committee and to the Ministry. For a time, therefore, there was indecision about what to do. Once more, Philipp Wiebe came to the rescue (see above, Section 108, first footnote)! How the matter began in the Molotschna is unknown to us but we know exactly how it progressed. The above-mentioned teachers in the vicinity of Ohrloff—Peter Holzrichter, Johann Braeul, Sr., P. Siemens, Kornelius Unruh, Bernhard Harder (at that time living in Blumstein), Abram Goerz, a teacher, Friesen, in Tiege and perhaps a few more—after conferring personally with Wiebe and having received a few hints, handed a written request to the Supervisory Commission asking for the organizing of a "Molotschna Mennonite School Board," to which the former duties of the Agricultural Society in school matters would be transferred. The mention of Wiebe's name in this report gave it weight enough to be granted. In August, 1869, in the presence of President Ettinger, in Halbstadt, the Molotschna Mennonite School Board was organized with jurisdiction over the colonies of the region comprising Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld. Ettinger endorsed the formation of this Board in writing. The Board received the seal bearing the imperial arms (the double-headed eagle) and the inscription in Russian "Seal of the Molotschna Mennonite Educational Board." The question of the legality of this action was raised later on by the officials of the Ministry of Public Education and the problem has not been resolved to this day. It was certainly not a clandestine act. (At this point we will not proceed chronologically in order to conclude this particular matter. Unfortunately, because of a strange circumstance in the final stages of this section we are not in possession of copies of the mentioned and to-be-mentioned documents, their dates and numbers. However, the facts may be researched from these documents which lie in the archives of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board.) In 1877, acting on a request of the committee and of the Imperial Minister of Crown Lands, the ministerial committee thought it good to reward the second chairman of the school board, Andreas Voth, by honoring him with a large silver medal inscribed with the words "For Zeal" and by awarding him a diploma showing the reason for such action: an inscription stating "For Regulating the School System" in the two main areas of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld. More than ten years later, because of a controversy, the senate issued a decree which in no way cast doubt on the legal

competence of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board. However, a decree of the senate has the authority of a legislative act. Whether the founding of the M.M.S.B. is an administrative arrangement which an administrative body, the successor to the Supervisory Commission, may annul, or whether the school board may be dissolved only by legislative act, would have to be decided by a specifically requested declaration of the senate. The fact is that the Ministry of Public Education for a long time confirmed the newly-presented members of the school board (through the trustee of the Odessa School District), corresponded with the board and took it into account. Gradually, however, the board experienced more and more limitations in its jurisdiction and finally it was ignored completely. New appointees were no longer confirmed. But the competence of the "spiritual teachers" (see above, Sec. 295, III), or that of the Council of Church Leaders could not be negated because it was established by law. Consequently, at present then, all the members of the school board (or, "school commission") in Molotschna are appointed from the clergy, and commissioned by the Council of Church Leaders to see to the teaching of religion and German (see above, Section 299, 1, d.).

§373 Before we enter into the reform activities which the school board undertook (actually dealt with largely in the section devoted to village and secondary schools) we will give a list of the members. Philipp Wiebe was the chairman, as we know. His fellow-members were Peter Schmidt, Steinbach; Andreas Voth, Neu-Halbstadt; Franz Dyck, Blumenort (see above, "Ohrloff Secondary School"); Peter Isaak, Grossweide. Clergymen who were members in the early years, as far as we know, were Elder Isaak Peters, Pordenau (see above, *#269*) and Minister Dietrich Gaeddert, Alexanderwohl (see *#269*), perhaps substituting for Elder Jakob Buller, Alexanderwohl? Wiebe died in 1870, and Andreas Voth, whom Wiebe had already named as his successor, became the second chairman. Peter Schmidt soon resigned because of ill health. In the order of their election, and as accurately as possible, we list all (as far as we know) those men who were active in the Molotschna Mennonite School Board during those years: Minister Aron Rempel, Gnadenfeld, and his brother Gustav Rempel, the former Halbstadt Secondary School teacher. These two did especially outstanding reform work, as recognized in the above act of December 17, 1876. Then we have Daniel Unger, Waldheim; Elder Abram Goerz, Ohrloff (see above, "Village Schools") who was the representative of the Council of Church Leaders from 1875 to the present (1910). His tenure was interrupted only for a few years, and his representation was arranged according to the "Directives"[74] mentioned above. (For more on Goerz see "Mennonite Clergy.") Then there were Heinrich Ediger, Grossweide; Gerhard Klassen, Blumenort



a) Andreas Voth (1821-1885), Currently Chairman of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board.



b) Elder Abram Goerz, Representative of the Council of Church Leaders in the Molotschna Mennonite School Board.



c) Johann Karl Klatt, Formerly President of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board.



d) Peter Heinrich Heese, Formerly President of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board.

(see further, "School for Deaf Mutes"), who acted as chairman for some time after Voth and prior to Klatt; Kornelius Penner, Rueckenau; Heinrich Franz, former secondary school teacher in Halbstadt; Herman Abram Neufeld, former semstvo teacher; Minister Heinrich J. Janzen, Gnadenfeld (public school teacher for many years—the longest tenure in Steinbach, a genial self-taught man, especially in the Russian language); Heinrich Janz, Halbstadt (at one time a devoted student and an inspired follower of Janzen—formerly a teacher in Alt-Halbstadt); Peter Abram Ediger (see Ohrloff and "Halbstadt Secondary Schools"), chairman of the school board after Heese for about ten years to 1908. During and after the period of Voth and Goerz, the following three men elected in 1880 were of greatest importance to the board because of their well-directed and intensive co-operative work: the present Elder Heinrich Unruh, Halbstadt (Muntau) (see above, "Village School Teachers" and see below, "Mennonite Clergy") who was a member for 31 years and for a long time was the representative of the Council of Church Leaders and substituted for the chairman; Johann Karlov Klatt; and Peter Heinrich Heese (concerning Voth, Heese, and Klatt see below for more details).

§374 At present, 1910, the Molotschna Mennonite School Board, more correctly, the "School Commission," is composed of the above-mentioned elders Goerz and Unruh; Elder David Nickel, Rudnerweide; Minister Peter Unruh, Ohrloff; Minister Benjamin Ratzlaff, Gnadenfeld (see above, "Gnadenfeld Secondary School"); Minister Jakob Esau, Friedensruh; Minister Johann Duerksen, Landskrone; Minister David Claassen, Felsental (see above, "Halbstadt Secondary School"), elected as chairman of the board, and with authority in the Districts of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld in school matters. All these men were former teachers of village or secondary schools.

§375 Sub-divisions of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board, established in a similar legal manner, worked shoulder to shoulder in a spirit of unity with the Molotschna central office in the Molotschna settlements. Through their activities a few personalities have come to our attention: in the Crimea the often-mentioned Minister Franz Isaak and Elder Heinrich Martens. In Brasol (Schoenfeld Volost, District Alexandrovsk) there was David Loewens (a famous medical genius, and this author's first teacher in Sparrau before Peters) and Minister Jakob Enns. In Sagradovka (Ohrloff Volost, District Kherson) there was Johann Koehn, a teacher of many years in Halbstadt, Molotschna, and area administrator for some time in Sagradovka; and Elder Franz Martens, former village school teacher (see below, "Mennonite Clergy"). These and other Molotschna settlements now have their "school boards" or school commissions, similar to the one in Molotschna.

§376 The discussion of the reform work of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board has almost been exhausted in the paragraphs dealing with the secondary and village schools. We need to distinguish three time periods, though: the founding era of Voth; the era of brilliance of Klatt and Heese; and the last era, the time of decline. 1) The Voth era, or founding period extended from 1869 to 1883. Andreas Voth was a citizen of Gnadenfeld, or more correctly, of Brenkenhofswald (see #43). The elders Wilhelm and Friedrich Lange and teacher Heinrich Franz, Sr., had been his teachers and spiritual advisers. He was solidly educated for his time and in his youth his talents and education made him an exciting village teacher, first in Pastva (Molotschna), where he began teaching when he was still almost a boy, and then in Halbstadt. Like many talented Mennonite teachers of his time, he resigned his position much too early and became a business man. However, in the long run, he was not really successful in business. This fact should increase our appreciation for his applying so much of his time and effort for many years to the improvement of the community. In the footnotes for Section 267, 5, we have noted some facts about his social activities. The congregation at Petershagen, where he became a member through marriage, elected this talented and educated man to the position of minister. However, he declared himself unworthy of this high office and served only as a deacon. Immediately following the founding of the school board, the activities of this body were concentrated largely in the person of Voth, for Wiebe was ill and so could not serve except by giving advice—advice which Voth gathered from him through numerous personal visits. When M.L. Moliarov and K.B. Unruh were appointed as teachers at the Halbstadt Secondary School, Wiebe and Voth were vitally involved and in agreement with the Supervisory Commission, and Voth was able to soften or even eliminate by his untiring arbitration those inevitable points of friction which arose (something new, after all, was being formed, and so concern and anxiety abounded: teacher Rempel, for example, was thoroughly indisposed). Voth, strengthened by Wiebe's influential recommendations, enjoyed a high degree of esteem and trust from the colonial inspector and from the members of the Supervisory Commission. His home was always open to higher officials, social workers, and teachers, and it was always attractive (not luxurious, just modest and comfortable) because he and his wife knew how to make guests feel welcome. He was always being called upon to arbitrate matters, and his noble, impressive, but at the same time, almost humble manner was of great advantage to him among both the mighty and the lowly. He was always ready gladly to acknowledge the contributions of others. In 1870 Voth established a capital fund of 2000 rubles to be administered by the Molotschna Mennonite School Board for the

purpose of making loans to young people desiring to improve their teaching skills. The establishing of the fund happened as follows: Voth and other men purchased the "Sagradovka" land and for this work they had received a reward from the community. Voth accepted his part of the reward only with the stipulation that the money become the property of the school board for the above-mentioned purpose. Others followed suit and so 2000 rubles was collected. The first student to make use of this loan was P.M. Friesen, who studied in Switzerland and then in Moscow (see above, "Kornelius Unruh"). After Wiebe's death, Voth was immediately endorsed as chairman of the board by the Supervisory Commission, and it was not many years after that when Voth's work earned the above-mentioned reward for him (that is, the special citation of honor). All reforms in the Halbstadt Secondary School up to 1884 which we have described (and which the Ohrloff and Gnadenfeld schools, the pedagogical class excluded, accepted, and in which Heinrich Heinrich Reimer, Ohrloff, as in the whole school reform program of this period played a strongly supportive role) would have been unthinkable without Voth. He mediated between teachers and clergy, between teachers and regional officials, between these and district units, between the Mennonite community and the agents of the Ministry of Crown Lands—later on called the Ministry of Public Education. Before Voth resigned, a unified program existed in all village schools of both the Molotschna districts and their settlements. This meant a common curriculum and a rational method of instruction, a very successful one at that considering the composition of the teaching staff in those days. The success of the reform was evident also in the sensible, rational approach to the teaching of Russian. The teachers' conventions, revived during Voth's era (see above, "Cornies" and "Philipp Wiebe"), proved highly beneficial to emphasize and promote this approach, and were attended by both village and secondary school teachers. These efforts were strengthened by study commissions of the school board and the secondary and village school teachers.[75] (See above, Document, Dec. 17, 1876) Most teachers were engaged in uninterrupted, active learning opportunities, constantly working and moving ahead. Those who were not willing to participate were removed and replaced by others. "It was a joy to be alive!" is a statement attributed later on to one of the participating teachers. Above all else, the pedagogical class was Voth's major contribution. But he was also enthusiastic about the education of girls, and made an attempt to begin such a program, as we have shown under "Girls' Schools." Here, as elsewhere, his ideals were those of the Moravians. Shoulder to shoulder with Voth we find Goerz. And supporting them, according to ability, but always in unity and harmony were the previously-named individual members of the school board of

those days. In 1883 Voth resigned because of fatigue (see *#267*, 5, footnote). His only "Thank you" was a fine album beautifully bound and presented to him by the teachers and the friends of the schools. Nothing so arouses one's indignation as the final treatment of Voth! Not one of the prominent men of that society did what he was capable of doing for him: not the schools' friends nor his own personal friends. Consequently, each one of his contemporaries received a similar "Thank You," more or less, later on! To analyze all this would be interesting and educational but it could be done only in a separate booklet and even at that, only after several years. That the name dies before the man does was an experience Voth had to face for about one and one-half years: he died on June 17, 1885, aged 64 years. On the foundation that Voth had laid—and only on that foundation—Heese and Klatt were able to expand the work to ever increasing dimensions and impressive forms.

§377 2) The Klatt-Heese era, or the period of outstanding accomplishments in the work of the school board lasted from 1884 to 1896. In 1880, still during the time of Voth's full activity, Peter Heinrich Heese and Johann Karlov Klatt were elected to the school board. For a considerable time, they worked with, and beside Voth in unity and in appreciation of his outstanding personality. Soon after Voth's retirement, Klatt was elected chairman (1884). From that time one, he and Heese alternated the chairman's position and substituted for each other. Klatt, who lived more at the center of the area (Ohrloff), ran the office, and Heese, who lived 80 versts from Ohrloff and Halbstadt on his estate Ober-Maitschokrak (Umanzev), did the travelling and the public relations work. Both however, were active in school visitation, supervised examinations in the schools, and contributed to meetings and conventions to such an extent that it is difficult to separate one's work from the other's. Consequently, this era belongs to them both. Heese's education and teaching service have been mentioned briefly under "Ohrloff Secondary School." Klatt, like Voth, is a son of Gnadenfeld and a former student of Heinrich Franz, Sr. He was still very young when he took a teaching position on the great estate of Johann Cornies, Jr. (see above, "Ohrloff Secondary School"). This estate was later owned by Cornies' son-in-law. Through independent study and by exploiting the elaborate library of the Cornies family, Klatt expanded his good elementary school education considerably. Of great benefit to his development was his close contact with the Russian nobility (the land-owning class), with higher officials and with businessmen like those of the semstvo, representatives of this group often visiting the Cornies' residence. With these people Klatt maintained a close relationship during and after his father-in-law's time. Thus, Klatt became a member of the supervisory council of the

Melitopol vocational secondary school and was active in other institutions outside the Mennonite community. Largely through these contacts he was broadened culturally. He widened his insights and grew to be socially at ease, so that his participation in Mennonite school matters and especially his representation of these matters before the higher authorities was distinguished. His very solid economic situation gave him a decided advantage over Voth, in this area at least. Heese received his education in the Mennonite public and secondary schools (in Ekaterinoslav and Chortitza), then in Russian middle and university level schools. With his intellectual capacity, his generous and jovial personality, his respect-engendering and winning conduct, his pedagogical inclinations, and his experiences as a secondary school teacher, even though that had been only for a short time, Heese became not only a mediator for the schools, a promoter, an adviser and controller of the faculty in regard to industriousness, character, and methodology, but also a knowledgeable expert and inspector in respect to methodology used in the village schools and in the secondary institutions, especially in the teaching of Russian. His independent, considerable personal fortune and his great generosity toward charitable endeavors, especially educational ones, caused Heese to achieve considerable importance. We feel somewhat reticent at this point since we are completing this part of our book for our contemporaries, but we must at least mention something of all of this. Surely, for some of our contemporaries we have said too much, but "history" cannot always be tactful. We have called this period the Heese-Klatt period (or the Klatt-Heese era, which is the same thing). Of course it was not these two alone who brought the era such brilliance. In the first place, they stood on the shoulders of A. Voth, whose very great importance our dear readers will hopefully recognize more adequately than did the larger number of his contemporaries. Without inheriting from Voth, Heese and Klatt never could have become what they did become for the school. Also they could not have become what they did become if they had not had the support of their fellow-workers. From 1890 to 1894 Heinrich Franz (discussed under "Halbstadt Secondary School") belonged to this group of fellow-workers. His education, his teaching gifts, his experience and his large fortune caused him to emerge as a powerful personality. (We refer to the economic circumstances of these men again and again because these circumstances gave these men a great strength and independence in their society, and in official circles.) It did not take Franz long to become interested in and to work hard at school matters. Many teachers testified that he had considerable influence on their work. It seemed as though he longed for the years when he was a young teacher, which only a few years before his premature death, he called the best years of his life. (We can mention

only briefly that his leaving the Halbstadt school injured that school so much that the wound, only recognized later, could never be healed.) Besides these three extraordinary men, there were others who, by diligent self-teaching, worked themselves up to leading positions among their fellow teachers. They became pioneer workers in their society—men wholly and completely of the people, yet at the same time, head and shoulders above them. These men are mentioned above: Goerz, Unruh, etc. They, by cultivating relationships, knew how to popularize and make acceptable the new ideas not only to the Council of Church Leaders but also to the faculties and to the congregations. Achieving this was really a glorious accomplishment for the period under discussion. The most important work done in this time period dealt with village school matters. (The secondary schools, after Voth, experienced hardly any change in their outer appearance, as we can determine from the paragraphs relating to them.) New methods in teaching Russian (with better qualified teachers—every year a few new pedagogues were brought in); a German reader (by Kornelius Unruh and Karl Wilhelm), which was accepted only with great difficulty;[76] a Bible Story primer, church history, and a German grammar—all these were products of local authors and were endorsed by the higher officials; introduction of arithmetic in the Russian language, a unified methodology (in Voth's time the work had been correctly steered toward this)—these above all else, distinguish the period under consideration.

The combined superior strength of the men under discussion here, and especially the strength of Heese and Klatt, made it possible for the Molotschna Mennonite School Board to exist long enough to be effective and not be crippled twenty years before its time or completely buried as was the case in the other German colonies. The respect these men enjoyed from all levels of the administration was like a dike that prevented for a long time the inundation of the institution. Proof that an acknowledgement of the work cannot be denied is seen in the fact that many of the village school teachers were honored by having medallions presented to them as rewards. The presentations of course, were made after the school directors had presented teachers as worthy of this honor. This was very similar to what happened in Voth's day: the secondary school teachers were recognized "as extraordinary, industrious, and conscientious in the fulfilling of their duties." This acknowledgement came first from the officials of the Ministry of Crown Lands (July 31, 1880) and then from the Ministry of Public Education with the letter of gratitude (November 27, 1882, No. 8651 of the Odessa School District). But in spite of this, the crippling of the work of the school board began during the terms of these outstanding people: the administration frowned on such an instrument of society. We will not give any special

details here. And strangely enough, the "glowing period" came to a sudden stop! Franz died in 1894; in the same year Elder Goerz, because of difficult conditions in his church, was forced to lay aside his work (which he, however, took up again soon after); and in 1896 Heese and Klatt resigned from the school board. To report on the reasons and circumstances is not within the framework of this writing. During this time Heinrich Heinrich Reimer,[77] Ohrloff, who had been an outstanding friend of the school, and who had always been a representative of the congregations at all levels of officialdom, was forced to abandon all activities because of illness. He, Heese, and Klatt could be called the "hosts of the congregations" (the Taurida Mennonites). What was God saying to this body of people by taking away their "strong men" almost in one day?! May this community never forget the debt of gratitude it owes to these men! From this there followed:

3) The declining period of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board. From 1896 to 1910 the history of the institution was that of a slow but unstoppable atrophying. And by now it is entirely dead, forever, in the form and name in which it was created, even though its death has not been legally pronounced. But this too, will come. The time is now ripe to find new ways of actively supporting these sacred matters even under new legal regulations. There is the Council of Church Leaders with its "school commission," the village community, the district congregation with its official offices, the school society, the teachers' society. All these institutions have their lawful rights and possibilities. To adapt to these lawful possibilities, "to adapt to the times" without cowardice and without insolence, maintaining unblemished loyalty and correct manners, remaining untiringly wakeful and energetic—this must be the assignment of today for us as a school community. Times change and forms are altered—but wisdom, faithfulness, and strength always find their area of influence and their means of action. An immovable pedantry regarding means and methods, a rigid conservatism which fails to understand the times—these are the death of any cause! We need men like Cornies, Voth, and so on, for our times! "No point in crying!"

5. The Chortitza School Board §378

In the Chortitza District the school board (here called Secondary School Board) played a much lesser role than was the case in the Molotschna. From 1869 to 1905 school matters peaked mainly in the activities of two men who are well-known to us: Heinrich Epp and A.A. Neufeld. When the school boards were organized in 1869, Epp had been a secondary school teacher for eleven years and a minister for five. Soon he became a representative of an elder and then was elected as elder. His general popularity and his authority in school matters actually made him

the "school board in person." With his influence he supported Neufeld, who played his role as has been described in the general school matters of this district. We share those things about the school board which have been most kindly reported to us by those who knew the situation firsthand. The information gained through my questionnaire, and by my examination of the public papers has been very limited. Minutes were not kept in those early days, and the correspondence with school officials was so meager that no special office was maintained. Following is the order in which the chairmen of the school board held office during a total period of forty years. How long each of them served is impossible to determine. 1) Elder Gerhard Dyck in the 70s; 2) Heinrich Epp (secondary school teacher and later an elder) at the end of the 70s and into the first half of the 80s; 3) A.A. Wallmann at the end of the 80s and into the beginning of the 90s; 4) Elder Isaak Gerhard Dyck was chairman for 12 years; 5) Johann Gerhard Lepp, from 1907. The present (1910) school board members are: Peter Abram Koop; Jakob Dahl; Johann Johann Thiessen, Ekaterinoslav; Peter Johann Thiessen; teacher and Minister David Rempel; Elder Isaac Dyck, representing the clergy. The church elder was always the representative of the clergy on the school board even if a minister was the chairman. The principal of the secondary school was also a member of the board. If necessary, the senior teacher of religion substituted for him. The outstanding members from the beginning to the present are as follows: Peter Abram Klassen; Johann David Epp (formerly area administrative secretary)—these two men worked especially effectively for the village schools. Their specific role was to be supervisors of schools (from 1872 on) since both had formerly been teachers for many years. The younger teachers benefitted from the experience of these two. Peter Thiessen (mentioned above); Peter Dyck (son of the former elder, Gerhard Dyck), who, through his influence as area administrator did much good for the secondary school, and was a warm friend of the school; Abram Wieler, Jasykovo; Johann Johann Thiessen, mentioned above. In all educational and welfare matters Thiessen has taken a leading role for many years: see further "Bethany" and "Publication Matters." Possibly one or another of the prominent persons has been overlooked.

As we noted above, we see that wisdom, strength, and faithfulness are not tied to names and forms: by what diverse means do we sometimes achieve desired results! This, too, was true of school matters in the two main districts of our Russian Mennonite community!

XXXIX.
WELFARE MATTERS

§379 What we really mean here is the welfare that expresses itself in special forms and institutions. Private works of charity and acts of welfare on the part of spiritual and civic Mennonite communities have always been practiced according to old apostolic and old evangelical Mennonite principles: mainly the care of the poor and ill. It would be difficult to write about these for they were modest and simple, but they continued steadily and naturally; sometimes stronger and warmer, and sometimes weaker and colder, but never completely ceasing to function. But in the huge and geographically wide-spread community to which the Mennonite group had expanded, a certain organization and specialization, as well as joint endeavors and public facilities, became necessary. United strength is needed to help those afflicted in various ways. The duties of the family and the group to give the helpless and destitute special care had been stipulated by the original Mennonite inheritance regulations (which are so old that their origin cannot be traced) which decreed that incurable cases of physical or mental illness, namely cripples, deaf-mutes, the blind, epileptics, mentally retarded, and so on, were to receive a double inheritance in comparison to what the healthy inheritors were to receive. In addition, those thus afflicted were to remain under the protection and care of the family, as well as of the church and civic community, and their interests were to be safe-guarded by the Orphans' Executive Committee (Orphans-men or Orphans-elders). Doing things this way was the expression of a healthy, evangelical life-principle of the community. But some of the destitute have nothing to inherit. And even an inheritance does not guarantee understanding, tender care. Even with the best principles and the best of intentions, what could a family, a village, or a religious community do for an epileptic, a deaf-mute, or for any other unfortunate person? It took a long time for the Mennonite community in Russia to take steps toward a united systematic endeavor which would take better care of obligations to the unfortunate of their own, and possibly, of other groups. We say "obligations" because, from the viewpoint of evangelical teaching, what we call "welfare" or "charity" is really doing one's duty, standing for righteousness.

A. Community Public Charitable Institutions §380

These were organized by the Mennonites of Russia only toward the end of the nineteenth century. We name the following: 1) The Maria Deaf-Mute School in Tiege, Molotschna; 2) the hospital in Muntau, Molotschna; 3) the home for the aged in Rueckenau; 4) the home for the

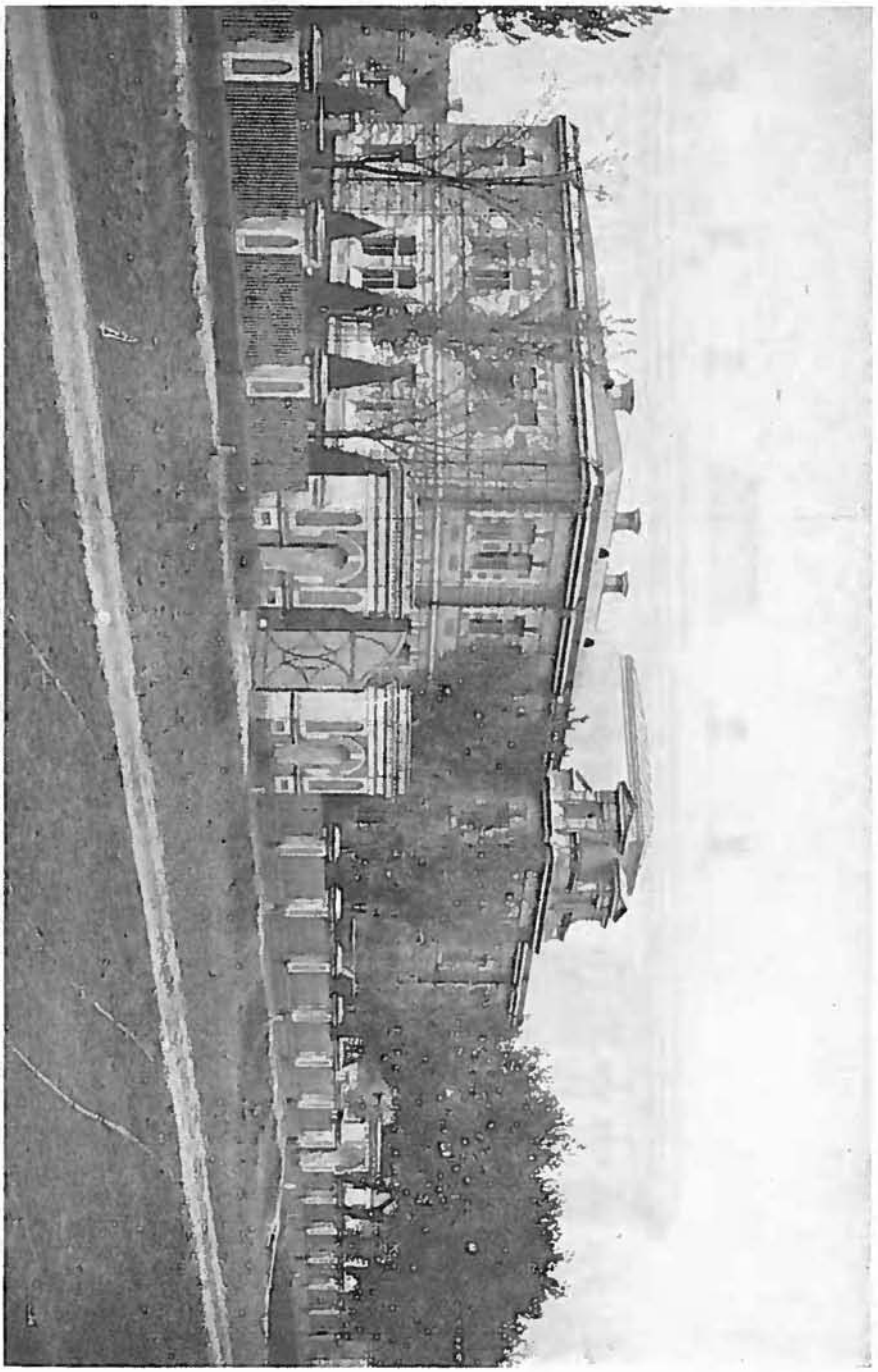
aged of the Halbstadt District; 5) the orphanage in Grossweide, Molotschna; 6) the deaconness home "Moria" in Neu-Halbstadt, Molotschna; 7) the hospital in Ohrloff, Molotschna; 8) the hospital in Waldheim, Molotschna; 9) the psychiatric institute "Bethany" in Alt-Kronsweide, Chortitza District.

§381 1. The Maria School for Deaf-Mutes in Tiege

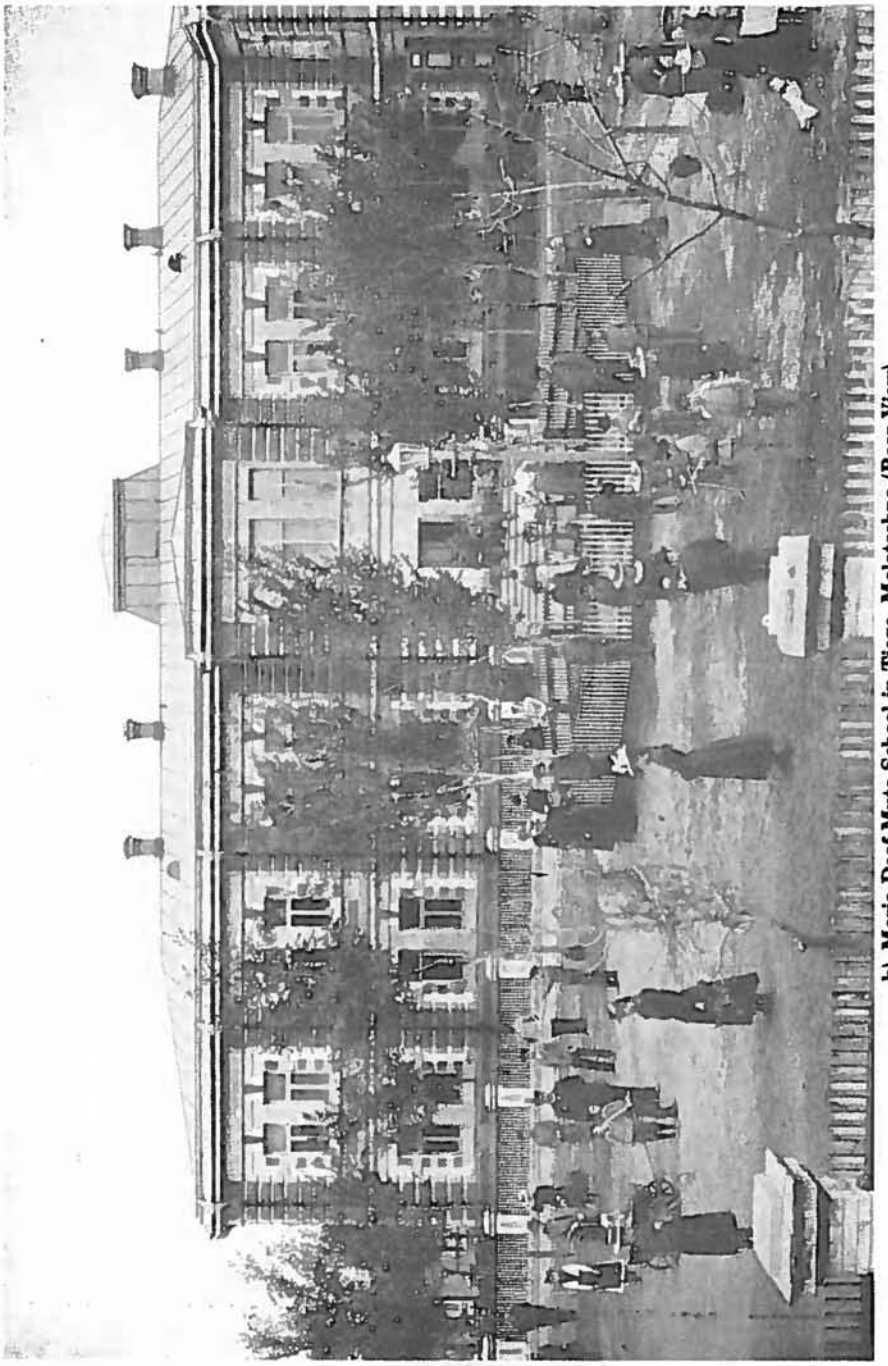
The first one to express the idea that a school for deaf-mutes should be established was not a Mennonite, but someone who was formally a stranger to the Mennonite community. He was the evangelical Armenian A.G. Ambarzumov ("Ambarzumianz"). During his studies in a teaching academy for the poor conducted by Zeller in Beuggen, Switzerland, he became acquainted with a school for deaf-mutes lead by a certain Zurlinden. He became deeply interested in the affairs of deaf-mutes and remained so for the rest of his life. We have no idea how he became involved with the Mennonites of South Russia, but we know that quite frequently he lived among them for shorter or longer periods of time. During these visits he sought out the deaf-mutes and, by influencing important persons in the community, endeavored to motivate some interest in constructing an educational and training institute. Among others, his most pronounced success was with Gerhard Klassen, Blumenort, already mentioned under "School Boards," and with the incumbent Halbstadt Area Administrator, Abraham Wiebe, Lichtenau. The latter knew how to lead matters in such a way that eventually the Halbstadt District decided to take the matter on as a formal responsibility, supported morally by the Mennonite Church. For this action, he gained the support of the Councils of Church Leaders. Wiebe and others added a more serious tone to the whole matter by founding the school as a memorial to Alexander the II's twenty-five years as Tsar. More details of this follow in the original document quoted below:

Translation

"'The copy of a copy.' M.d.J. The Taurida Governor. Provincial Board in matters relating to farmers. Dec. 22, 1881. No. 1059. Simferopol. To the Farmers' Board of the Berdiansk District. The acting Governor-General of Odessa has informed me on the 5th of December under No. 16 that on the submission of the report by His Honor, the Minister of Internal Affairs, about the suggestion of the Halbstadt Volost assembly that the twenty-five year reign of Alexander II be honored by erecting a school building for deaf-mutes, and that the institution be named after the Lady Empress of His Imperial Majesty, Alexander II, now resting in God, he has approved the name of 'Maria School' for the school to be built for deaf-mutes. He has decreed that



a) Maria Deaf-Mute School in Tiege, Molotschna (Street view).



b) Maria Deaf-Mute School in Tiege, Molotschna (Rear View).

thanks be expressed to the settlers of the named volost. I have the honor to inform the Farmers' Board about the will of His Imperial Majesty for announcement to the public meeting of the Halbstadt Volost assembly. The original is signed: representing the Governor, the Vice-Governor A. Buliubasch; the secretary N.N. with contents identical to the original. Area Administrator K. Ens. Secretary Trenkenschu."
(Seal).

The school was opened, but not until 1885, in a house of the above-mentioned Gerhard Klassen, Blumenort, who spent many years working for the cause with great zeal and love. Since New Year 1890 the school has its own building, P.H. Heese having been especially involved in its construction. The executive board of the institution is made up of two representatives of the Molotschna Volost and the Council of Church Leaders (formerly members of the school board); one must always be an elder or a minister; the third member is the treasurer and manager (managing director), who is elected for a three-year term by the Molotschna Council of Church Leaders and by both [78] districts. In addition there are six members elected from nominees presented by the executive. These come from both of the Molotschna district assemblies, and those elected serve for six years. The manager and treasurer calls meetings once or twice annually. When pedagogical questions arise, the principal of the school participates in the meetings. Financial matters, meals, in fact, the entire physical care of the students is looked after by "house parents." At present a nine-year course is offered at the school; instruction is solely in German and modelled after the program of the Mennonite village schools. When vacancies occur, children of other German-speaking areas besides Mennonites are accepted. At present the teaching staff consists of four males and one female. In its main building and in other buildings on the yard, the institution has rooms for studying, the sick, eating, sleeping, playing, and house-keeping for forty students. There is a teacherage, buildings for house-parents, one for the single female teacher, and one for a single male teacher. Besides this, the school owns two separate teacherages and one spare house with orchard and vegetable garden.

Teachers were:

1) Ambarzum Grigorievitsch Ambarzumov (presently teaching at the school for deaf-mutes in Moscow), 1885-91; 2) Jakob Jakob Doerksen (now a businessman) graduate of the Teachers' Institute for Deaf-Mutes in Frankfurt/Main, 1886-95; 3) Christian Christian Esenwein, 1887-1907. Esenwein is a graduate of the Teachers' Institute for Deaf-Mutes in Frankfurt/Main, presently teaching deaf-mutes in Zurich; 4) Mr. Rau (half a year), graduate of the same institute in Frankfurt

and at present director of the school for deaf-mutes in Moscow; 5) Heinrich Heinrich Janzen from 1893; graduate of the Frankfurt institute as well; 6) Wilhelm Wilhelm Sudermann, from 1895, graduate of the Halbstadt Secondary School pedagogical class, and of the Frankfurt institute; 7) Madame Baikovskaia, 1898-1900, assistant teacher; 8) Jakob Fast, 1901-03, assistant teacher and public school teacher; 9) Miss Sophie F. Peters, 1901-03 and 1907-09, assistant teacher; 10) Peter Wiens, 1903/04, assistant teacher and public school teacher; 11) Miss Anna Doerksen, 1903-08, deaf-mute, graduate of the Tiege school, needlework teacher and supervisor; 12) Abraham Julius Unruh, since 1905, graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School, the Halbstadt pedagogical class and of the Frankfurt institute; 13) H. H. Peters, since 1908, graduate of the Halbstadt Secondary School pedagogical class and of a teacher training institute for deaf-mutes in Berlin; 14) Miss Hoheisel, since 1909, graduate of a teacher training institute for deaf-mutes in the Baltic.

The faculty at present (December 1910) consists of: Sudermann as principal, Janzen, Unruh, Miss Hoheisel, and Peters. The salaries begin at 600 rubles and the maximum is 1400 achieved after seventeen years of service. Teacherage and 100 rubles for heating are additional. The single female teacher receives 400 rubles plus teacherage and meals. There is no pension fund.

The managing directors (guardians) were Gerhard Klassen, 1885-93; Johannes Philipp Wiebe, 1893-1905; Jakob Peter Schroeder, from 1905.

Houseparents: A.G. Ambarzumov (the teacher) and his wife, to 1891; Minister Heinrich Johann Janzen (see above, "School Board") and his wife, 1891-93; Mr. and Mrs. Quiring, 1893-95; Minister Abram Epp and wife, 1896-99; Gerhard Giesbrecht and wife, 1899-1908; Jakob Froese and wife, since 1908.

Supported and promoted by the Mennonite General Conference, the school is maintained by voluntary donations from all Mennonites of Russia. The institution has a fund but the interest from this is not nearly sufficient to meet needs (see above, "General Conference"—*#299*).

The results produced by the school are substantial: the graduates read and write with complete comprehension. They do arithmetic, know Bible stories well, and are acquainted with geography. Learning the manual skills in wood-working and basket-weaving for the boys, and the usual manual work that women do are very important. Many of the children have learned to speak in a normal manner. Quite a number of former students have become financially independent, and all of them have been drawn immeasurably closer to the human and Christian community; the pathway to a clear knowledge of God has been smoothed

out for them. This, the first charitable institution of all the Mennonites of Russia is a priceless jewel for them, and is worthy of the love and zealous co-operation of all.

II. The Hospital in Muntau, Molotschna §382

From its very beginning this institution was completely a private work of faith, and even today, legally, through confirmation by the authorities, the ownership and the risk of running the institution belongs to one family. It is its "risk of faith." Judging from outward appearances, the Mennonite minister Franz Wall of the Crimea was only a simple man of the land. Strongly influenced twenty-one years ago by the work of the well-known man of faith, George Mueller of Bristol, and irresistibly urged by his love for Jesus and his fellow-man, he dedicated his well-established farming estate to God for the purpose of rendering service to the ill. His wife agreed fully with his ideas, and so the work which is now a prospering institution began. The project won the confidence of everyone from near and far. People of all confessions and of every status, those unable to pay, and liberal rich men trusted themselves to the care of "Wall's House for the Ill" (the official title in the original document of confirmation). God has always provided doctors, too: during the first years it was the higher committee (Semstvo) and the district medical officer, Dr. W. L. Pedkov, then his successor, Dr. E. Tavonius, and others. Brother Wall died four years ago, aged 64, but his widow, his son (formerly an elementary school teacher) as director, his oldest daughter as head nurse and another daughter as supervisor of patient care, continued the wonderful work in the spirit of the deceased. The daughters, after a lengthy practice at home, have sought to complete their professional study abroad. The work is expanding gradually and surely as it increases its scope of service and its facilities. Also, the preparatory education of deaconesses was begun by Wall (see further, "Moria"). For more information about the spirit and the nature of the whole work we summarize some highlights from the

Annual Report for 1909

"It has been another year of rich blessings and much work, this year of 1909. With deep humility we may give sincere thanks to our Lord who in His grace has desired to use us in the work with the sick and suffering, supplying all our needs out of His plenty. The number of patients treated was 554; the total time spent in the hospital was 7240 days, so the patient care program has increased significantly compared with the previous years. Our eyes beheld a long line of varied needs and distresses, and yet this was merely a drop in the sea of human suffering under which mankind sighs. In view of this fact, how simple to answer

the question: What purpose is there in man's worldly existence? For the Christian, besides the main answer which involves resting in God, there is a further answer, not to be overlooked, namely, to be ready to alleviate the agony of others. This has actually happened during the past year. Sufficient means have been provided by friends of the institution. From various districts and from various parts of the fatherland donations have come in with the stipulation that the funds were to be used to assist patients without means of payment to receive regular and appropriate treatment. More than 1000 rubles have been donated by various church congregations and nearly three times as much, in both smaller and larger amounts, by private persons. Income has again exceeded expenditures to such an extent that for the new year the treasury has 3000 and several hundred rubles, and the institution is debt free. Because of the shortage of space and because of increased demands, we find it necessary to enlarge the institution. . . ."

At present the medical staff consists of Dr. Tavonius (now an independent-practicing physician) and Dr. Seiler, both of them from Dorpat. About nurses, see "Moria."

An auditing committee annually examines the exact public operational statement. Expenses for the year 1909 amounted to 11,182 rubles.

III. A Hospital in Waldheim, Molotschna,

was founded with the private funds, and through the faith of a Waldheim couple, the Warkentins. After four years this work is still battling against adverse circumstances and heavy disappointments. But God blesses in His own time and in His own way all that which is given to Him as an offering of love and gratitude. The truth of this statement will also be proven in respect to the work and sacrifice of the Warkentins.

IV. The Hospital at Ohrloff, Molotschna,

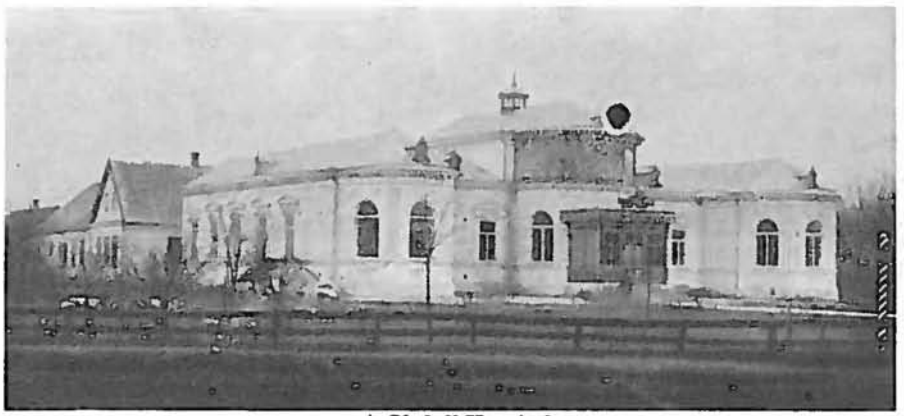
was completely (or mainly) financed by gifts of the inheritors of H.H. Reimer's estate, Ohrloff. It was opened January 7, 1910. Physicians taking up residence there were Dr. Fink of the Iuriev (Tartu) University (not a stranger to the Molotschna Mennonites, for he was a graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School) and Dr. Gerhard David Duerksen of the New Russian University of Odessa, graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School. At the end of the year 1910, Dr. Johann Johann Isaak arrived. He replaced Dr. Duerksen, who is leaving the country for a time. Dr. Isaak is a graduate of the Ohrloff Secondary School and of the Military Medical Academy of St. Petersburg. The matron is Miss Alexandra Liblik of Reval. The general manager is Heinrich D. Guenther. The project is enjoying a promising beginning under the obvious blessing of God.



a) Muntau Hospital (Franz Waus).



b) Deaconess Home *Moria* in Neu-Halbstadt.



c) Ohrloff Hospital



d) Orphanage in Grossweide, Molotschna.



e) Psychiatric Institution "Bethany" in Alt-Kronsweide near Einlage.

V. Newspapers report the establishing of a "shelter for the sick" in the Molotschna settlement of Neu-Samara, Post Office Pleschanovo, Province of Samara. This too, is a project being undertaken with voluntary gifts from those who love others. We have no further details about its founding, nor do we have any other information.

VI. The Home for Deaconesses, "Moria," in Neu-Halbstadt, Molotschna, §383

was opened on December 3, 1909. The purpose of this institution (its official Russian name is the "Moria Society of Evangelical Sisters of Mercy") is the training of deaconesses as well as supporting and taking care of them during sickness and old age. They receive three years of free preparatory training, live in the institution and are supplied with all necessities of life during their study and later on so long as they remain a member of the society. The institution is a private project of mercy. In various ways the following men have especially contributed to the launching of the work: Franz Wall, deceased; Peter Schmidt, Steinbach, deceased; and Dr. Tavonius (of the Iuriev University). An executive committee of six to twelve members provides overall leadership. The members at present are as follows (Dec. 1910): Chairman, Elder H. Unruh; Secretary, Dr. Tavonius; members: Jakob Jakob Sudermann (see above, "Halbstadt Middle School" and below, "Bethany"); Franz Franz Wall; David Jakob Dick, Apanlee; and Minister H.J. Braun.

A housefather, who is also in charge of training, and a matron direct the internal affairs of the institute. The first one was Minister Jakob Kroeker (see above, "M.B. Church, Spat and Rueckenau"); the present one is teacher Gerhard H. Doerksen (see above, "Model School"). The matron is Miss Viera Michelson of Reval. Dr. Tavonius instructs in the medical subjects. This work, which is conducted in close relationship with "Wall's House for the Ill," can best be evaluated if we quote once again from the previously-quoted annual report by Br. Franz Wall, Jr.:

". . . there was no lack of nurses either; the Lord has sent the necessary workers to this house. This part of the work [the course for nurses] has been revised during the past year, and the nurses have received their own new residence, 'Moria,' which makes it possible to give them more help in completing their training program, and in taking better care of their physical needs. The hospital can now also devote its energies totally to its purpose, namely expanding the nursing facilities and meeting its responsibilities. The unity that began as a complete trust in God shall now continue with new and free cooperative, joint and supportive efforts. May the Lord in His Mercy bless this intention as well as the entire future activity of the institution."

§384

VII. The Psychiatric Institution "Bethany" at Alt-Kronsweide, Chortitza District

This work of mercy, but also of "righteousness" according to the light given by Scripture, is the newest project of our Old-Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia. In fact, it is the very first project of this nature which, from its inception, was supported unitedly by all sections and groups. (General participation and accepting of responsibility for the Maria School for Deaf-Mutes was realized only after a few years.) Actually, the highest authority for "Bethany" is the "General Mennonite Conference" (see above, *##289* and *299*) as established legally by statute by the Ministry of the Interior. The institution functions under the direction of an executive committee elected by this general body. At first the project was to have no denominational ties; more correctly, it was to be interdenominational—for Lutherans, Mennonites and others, but this proved to be unworkable. The project was promoted mainly in the Chortitza-Ekaterinoslav districts, especially by the *Botschafter*. In the spring of 1911 the institution is to begin its work primarily with epileptics, with the mentally ill, and with those patients having nervous disorders—the most unfortunate among the unfortunate. We refer to the minutes of the "General Conference" held at Schoensee, Oct. 1910 (*#299*, paragraph 2), and we quote parts of the minutes of the executive committee meeting on Nov. 10, 1910, and also from later minutes to report on the present condition of the project (the following is a summarizing of reports of those minutes gathered from the *Friedensstimme* and from the *Botschafter*):

"The construction of the pavilion for female patients is so far advanced that the administrative body decided to open it for its intended purpose on March 15. The pavilion is designed for 18 beds; 13 patients have already asked to be admitted. The opening of the pavilion for male patients is scheduled for June 18. Mr. Peter Koop presents a cost estimate he has worked out relative to the construction of the main building—a projected 70,000 rubles. Added to this there is to be a steam laundry, and other facilities; in total, the sum projected is set at 80,000 rubles. Power will be donated by the firm of Lepp and Wallmann. The main building is designed for 45 patients as well as for various offices. Construction of the main building is to begin only after the 80,000 rubles have been received. The Lord be praised and thanked, for donations to the present have been so generous as to exceed expectations. In fact, since June 20, 1908, donations average a little over 100 rubles per day, not including the Schroeder bequest of 40,000 rubles, nor the various products, cattle, and so on. May the Lord make willing especially the hearts of the parents who do not need to send one of their loved ones to

'Bethany' so that they will donate liberally so that the main building can be constructed. For the foreseeable future there still is a critical shortage of staff, mainly male staff. Because the institution still has no chaplain, the executive committee has appointed the present housefather, Peter Schellenberg, to that position on an interim basis. Schellenberg has completed the program of studies of the Alliance Bible School in Berlin, and has taken a nursing care course in the Bodelschwingh Institute at Bielefeld. The latter institution is the ideal which the creators and builders of 'Bethany' hold for their institution. The Bodelschwingh Institute is, indeed, a beautiful model."

The present executive committee (Dec. 1910) consists of: 1) Chairman Jakob Jakob Sudermann, Apanlee, Post Office Novovassilievka, Province Taurida; 2) Vice-Chairman Peter Abram Koop, Einlage, Post Office Kitschkas; 3) Johann Gerhard Lepp, Schoenwiese,[79] treasurer; 4) Abraham Peter Lepp, Schoenwiese, secretary; 5) Elder Johann Peter Klassen, Neu-Schoenwiese; 6) Minister Heinrich Jakob Braun, Neu-Halbstadt; 7) Abraham Abraham Bergmann, Bergmannstal, Post Office Solonnenkoie, Province of Ekaterinoslav; 8) Heinrich Jakob Heinrichs, Kuprianovka, Post Office Sofievsky-Savod. Candidates: 1) Johann Johann Reimer, Einlage, Post Office Kitschkas; 2) Kornelius Kornelius Martens, Einlage, Post Office Kitschkas. Revisions and Auditing Committee: 1) Johann Johann Thiessen, Ekaterinoslav; 2) Abraham Abraham Koop, Schoenwiese; 3) Jakob Hermann Niebuhr, Schoenwiese; 4) Kornelius Kornelius Huebert, Schoenwiese; 5) Franz Daniel Peters, Nadeshdovka, Post Office Chortitza. The physician in charge is Dr. Stieda of Riga.

VIII. The Home for the Aged in Rueckenau, Molotschna §385

This quiet and unassuming work of charity was begun in 1895 by Martin Peter Friesen of Rueckenau who gave the Rueckenau congregation (Mennonite Brethren) a house and garden to be used to house the elderly. Family-style care is provided here for approximately fifteen aged and weak persons. This modest beginning of a work of charity is an example to us all.

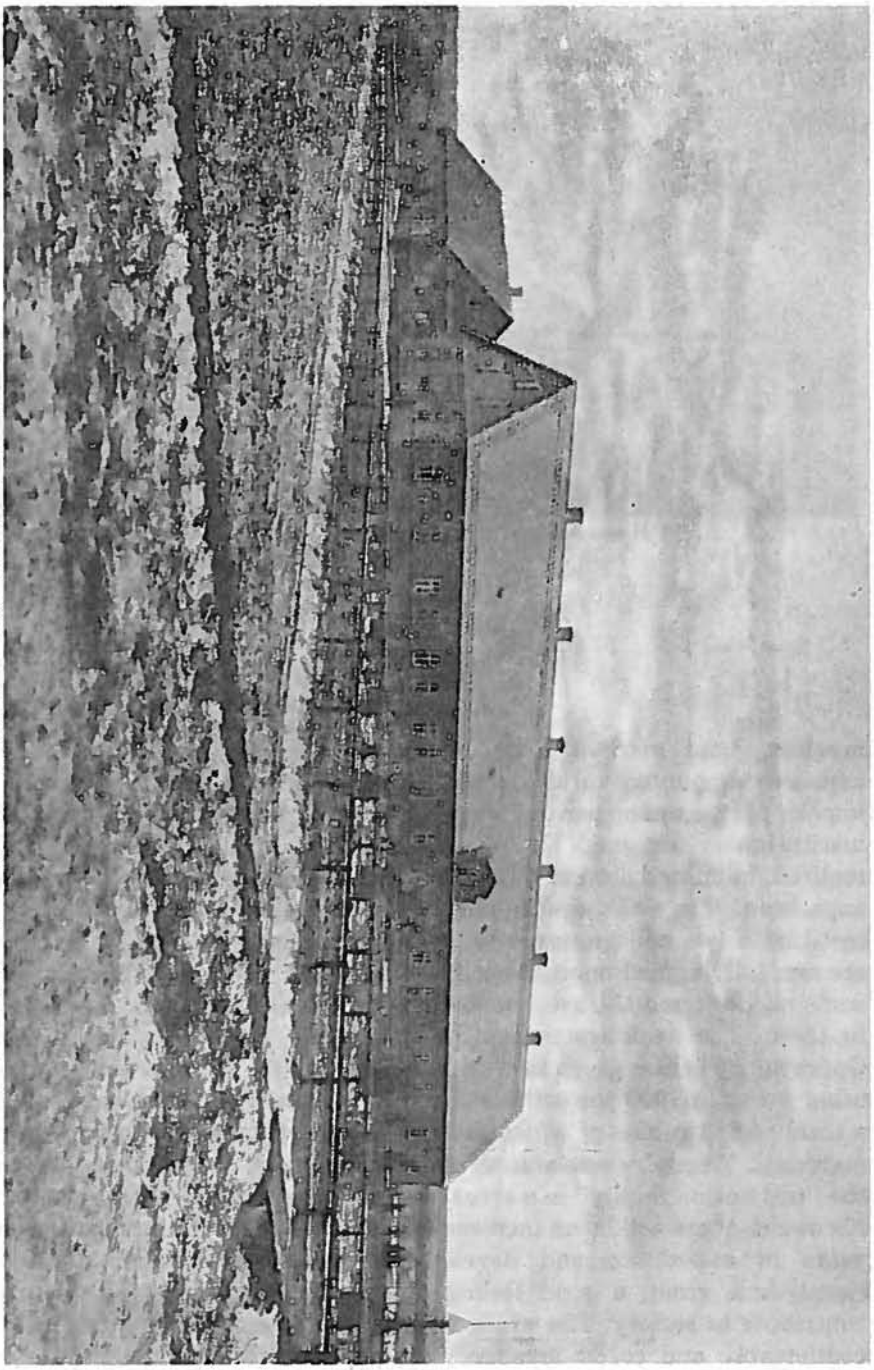
IX. The Home for the Aged of the Halbstadt Region at the Kuruschan (on the "sheep-common")

This institution was founded as a memorial to and as a thank offering for the 100-year existence, from 1804 to 1904, of the Molotschna Mennonite Colony, the present regions of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld. A fund was gathered for this memorial so that buildings could be erected.

For this fund a levy of three kopeks per dessiatine was assessed. (Similar fund-raising was organized in the Gnadenfeld area. The money is gathering interest, but so far we have no information about an actual founding of the institution.) The institution of the Halbstadt area is now in its fourth year. We have only very little information about its beginnings. In documentary form we have really only one letter, and that is a private one, with details of how a great work can develop from modest, even hidden beginnings. This teaches us not to be hesitant to begin a work for which there is little guarantee of success, nor cause to believe in any degree of future success. Two thoughtful men, concerned about the community's welfare, were discussing the past 100 years of the Molotschna Mennonites: a home for the aged was suggested originally (as far as we know) especially as an anniversary memorial for the Halbstadt Volost. The recipient of the following letter donated twenty-five rubles to the writer as "a first droplet" for the cause. The rest is detailed in the letter. Johann Philipp Wiebe, Ohrloff-Kampenhausen, writes to Johann Philipp Isaak, [80] Boshedarovka, Tiege, as follows:

"Kampenhausen, July 23, 1903. Dear Friend Isaak! On July 11, I received the assignment from the Area Administration to collect money for a home for the aged, which the people of the area wish to found in gratitude for 100 years of well-being of our people [especially the Molotschna Mennonites] in the Russian fatherland. The stipulation is that of the monies collected, the fourth part be submitted to the Tsar's mother in order to alleviate not only our needs but also the general needs in the land. And so I have added to the money already collected your previously submitted sum and I believe I have acted in accordance with your wishes in this matter. In telling you this, I also ask that you collect funds again among your acquaintances so that more and more may be gathered for the cause. In any case, what we gather will be merely a token compared to the great benefits our people have enjoyed during these years in Russia. I know that nowhere else in the world does a people have so many rights and privileges, especially as these relate to children, as we have here in Russia. May we be grateful to the Giver of all good gifts and may we show our thankfulness by walking as true Christians and by being genuine in all our actions. But sad to say, many do not seem to be aware of the benefits they enjoy!!! With cordial greetings, your most devoted Johann Wiebe."

The buildings of the institution have cost 41,000 rubles. Besides the funds collected, the institution was given 35 dessiatines of land from the total landmass designated as "rental district" or land area to support the landless. Early in November 1906, the home began to function. In 1908 and 1909 it had about fifty occupants: the lonely aged, incurable



a) Home for the Aged of the Halbstadt Volost on the Kuruschan (Molotschna).



b) Home for the Aged in Rueckenau (Molotschna).

invalids, aged married folks, widowed, and unmarried people. The expenses amounted to about 6000 rubles per year which is about 33 kopeks per occupant per day or ten rubles per occupant per month. The institution is designed for 100 persons, but if this number is to be realized, buildings need to be erected. There is sufficient land for building expansion. Many of the villages bring their helpless village poor to this institution (we believe not only from the Halbstadt region?). Expenses are mutually agreed upon. Some families do the same with their invalids; some people come themselves so that they may receive the care offered to them. The work consists of housekeeping, stable work, gardening. Opportunity is also given to work at manual skills: women knit, men do other work. In 1909 the articles these people had fashioned were sold for a total of 822 rubles of which 290 rubles was subtracted for the cost of materials. The dairy was able to make a tidy profit of 173 rubles. And so, the "institution family" has actually contributed a part of its own needs. No doubt, there will be an increase in activities of this nature given a few years of experience and development and it will give the large closely-knit group a good feeling of still having something useful to contribute to society. The whole work is solidly based, practical and yet comfortably and cosily arranged. Of great charm and beauty for the

institute, besides the excellent orchard, is a developed wooded area, formerly a park. This has beautiful pathways, resting places, glorious flowerbeds, and a magnificent, well-planned cemetery where a few grave-mounds designate the last resting place of the bodies of the deceased citizens of the Home for the Aged. In the "Home" God's Word is read daily, and every Sunday a minister conducts services. Ministers of all congregations of the Halbstadt, as well as many of the Gnadenfeld regions, participate. The management of the institution is in the hands of a committee whose chairman is Elder Abram Goerz. The houseparents are Bernhard Epp and his wife of Rosenort, whose interest has led them to dedicate their energies to this work. (Their well-established residence in Rosenort has been rented.) The entire financial care, the cleaning, the physical care, the maintenance of order—for which much energy was spent especially at the beginning of the institution's work—is conducted in a family-style manner by the houseparents assisted by a few domestics and by the members of the home themselves according to their individual abilities. Considering the newness of this large venture, all activities are going well. The institution blossoms because the people involved are very conscientious and faithful to their duty. The institution is worthy to be noticed, to be critically observed. It is also worthy of love, trust, and intercession. The community should gladly sacrifice for this cause. Yet we believe that the houseparents are being burdened with too heavy a physical and spiritual responsibility. A family of 50 to 100 persons, the present size of the institution family, requires a professional, a person trained in giving physical and spiritual care, an experienced "brother of mercy" or "deacon" as is the case in the "Rauhes Haus" (see above, *#52*, d) and the Bodelschwingh institution where such people are also trained. And the need is just as urgent for an experienced deaconess to assist the faithful houseparents (compare with "XII"). May much tender love, wisdom, and willingness to sacrifice be offered to the houseparents and to the inhabitants by the whole Halbstadt community family so that this "Jubilee Institution" may actually be a God-pleasing sacrifice of gratitude, something of beauty for the Mennonite community, to the praise of our Father in Heaven! Matthew 5:16; Psalm 50:23.

X. The Orphanage in Grossweide, Molotschna §386

Like "Wall's House for the Ill," so too this orphanage was founded because a couple, the Abraham Harders, were driven by love and faith. Four years ago, they invested all their goods and their living in the creation of this work and founded a family-style institution. Today, December 1910, it is in every respect—legally (through confirmed statutes), educationally, and financially—a well-established institution, with its own school of 27 children. Manual skills, too, are taught. With

gratitude to God and men, the houseparents are able to meet costs through the necessary donations flowing in from ever-widening areas. Even regional meetings of distant volosts have begun to support this project financially. The motto of the Harders, placed over the main entrance of their home which every visitor must notice, reads: "My help comes from the Lord, who has created heaven and earth"—and this motto is proving itself as a motto of faith in their work!

XI. The "School for the Poor" at Beresovka at the Station Davlekanovo, Province of Ufa

This institution, at present consisting of four classes, which is essentially quite similar to the last named, was founded approximately 10 years ago by the estate owner Franz Klassen (now in America), by donating 50 dessiatines of land and a house for this purpose. Jakob Johann Martens, [81] minister, teacher, and former student at the Halbstadt Secondary School, who had directed a private secondary school at Sagradovka for many years, took charge of the school, and, like Franz Wall and Abram Harder, believing and daring, he put all his considerable farm property (land, etc.) into the enterprise and dedicated his strength for the rest of his life to it. The school, as an independent institution with a dormitory, is registered in his name, and he is entrusted with financial responsibility for it. Besides instruction each child receives all necessities and pays something "according to ability" or, as is the case with many, nothing. Houseparents, teachers, and students have often had to live quite frugally when students thronged to the school in too large numbers, and teachers did not have the heart to refuse them. However, the school is operating quite well now. In part the situation is eased by the fact that many of the poor settlers there (the school admits students without regard to confession) have moved to Siberia onto "share-crop" land. How God also helps here through loving people is shown by Brother Martens' acknowledgement of a gift as quoted in the *Friedensstimme*. We might give the short, cheerful article the heading "A Day of Celebration by a Director of a School for the Poor." At the same time the article affords an insight into the way the contributions come in, most frequently in small amounts (besides such small ones, also large and immense ones as flow into "Bethany" and other costly institutions). Martens' experience is repeated in the case of all directors and administrators of similar faith institutions within our community. May many get the desire, for the sake of God, the needy, and the suffering, to bring about similar "days of celebration" for such "good Samaritans" that God raises up for our people, who strive to bring evangelical justice to the "least!" We cordially wish it also especially for those who in such undertakings until now have had to taste only

bitterness and grief! ". . . That you have done unto me" (Jesus).—Brother Martens writes:

"School for the Poor in Beresovka, Ufa. The first . . . has been a special day for us, singular in its kind in ten years. God's ways are inscrutable; gloriously He brought it to pass. Towards the end of . . . we had a visit at our school; nine teachers had come. It was a great joy for us. On this occasion I openly expressed the wish to improve the school if the Lord were to provide the means. One of our classrooms is on the shady side of the house; consequently, it is very dark. On the date mentioned above a dear brother came to me and announced himself as night guest. Before evening devotions he said to me that he had to deliver various items from his village: 3 tins of lard and 3 hams, also 151 rubles and 84 kopeks. On behalf of a dear brother D. Klassen, who gave us 15 rubles with only two words: seed wheat. Was this not too much already? No, still more! A dear brother in our vicinity gave me 100 rubles of his own, and shortly before someone had already given my son Jakob 50 rubles for our school. I worship the power of love! Herewith I acknowledge the gifts. May God reward! Things have gone well so far. We are healthy, thank God. Several children are ailing. Greetings to dear Brother K. H. from B. Jakob Martens."

XII. The Institution "Good Samaritan" §387

for the Training of Male Nurses First and Second Class (Assistant Medical Officers and Medical Orderlies) for "Bethany" and all Hospitals, etc., as well as for the Assistance of Doctors in the Villages.

Where?! asks the surprised reader. Where is it and since when does it exist? It is still nowhere; but it must come about. As "twelfth" must come if a dozen is to be completed, so this institution must come. We think that just as "Moria" exists beside the Muntau Hospital, so "twelfth," founded on a firm and broad basis, belongs to the one at Ohrloff, or else anywhere in our midst. We need male nurses as well as female nurses. One needs only to think of "Bethany," where for seven open positions for orderlies only one application has been made, of the many undesirable conditions such as when there are only female nurses for male patients in a hospital and perhaps several peasants as servants, of the frequent ineptitudes, blunders, and ignorance in the care of the sick in the homes. This paralyses the work of the doctors and often becomes so very disastrous. (Compare also above "Home for the Aged"). And how many Christian young men are there among us who eagerly look for a work which is "worth living for." Many a young man would be in his right place in such an institution, but is attending some kind of seminary, where he is not in his place because he has not been called to it.

As a final observation at the end of our section on charitable institutions we want to point out that the fathers of the deaconesses' program in Germany have received their incentive partly from the Mennonites in Holland (according to C.H. Wedel in *Monatsblaetter*, and Pastor H. v. d. Smissen in *Mennonitische Blaetter*, and others). The "Doopsgezinde" in the Netherlands, at about the middle of the last century, and still to some extent today, had deaconesses for the churchly diaconate, the care of the poor and the sick. This institution the Anabaptist parent churches have taken from the apostolic practice. (Rom. 16:1, ". . . Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae," and other places.) So we Mennonites retrieve from other evangelicals (for our present diaconate is borrowed from foreign examples) what they learned from us, before we had lost it in the general Mennonite decline (cf. #19 above). In Russia it has taken almost 100 years until the first organized charitable institution came about: the beautiful Maria School for the Deaf and Mute. This child of loving care now belongs to the entire Mennonite community of our land. The latest such venture, emerging "Bethany," also formally and legally belongs to the entire community, and, as the sacrifices for it prove, is warmly welcomed as a work of love. The circle of participants in the orphanage and in almost all related institutions is growing constantly wider. One only needs to read the receipts of gifts and statements of accounts in the Mennonite periodicals. Together with missions to the heathen (##300-320) of the General Mennonite Conference and the forestry service, they weave a uniting bond, a bond of love and of special value and strength around the groups and confessions. And already therein, apart from their direct purposes, lies a worth that cannot be valued enough. They provide a field for faith to work in; they are a counter-balance to gross materialism, the mania for riches. They are in the best sense of the word "spiritual works of civilization" and at the same time promoters of the spiritual-Christian values of civilization, branches of the tree grown from the mustard seed. We hope that the institutions described signify the first spring swallows of a fruitful summer.

§388 B. Community and Patriotic Charity Contributions

Above under ##260-266 we have already brought some information about them. Yet because of various new causes we feel the need to give a few more particulars here. Highly interesting are several documents, besides other abundant and well-ordered statistical material, which have been kindly sent to us by the Chortitza Area Administrative Office. They reveal how, already in the early times of their residing in Russia, the Mennonites have taken an interest in the needs of their new homeland.

1) "The title 'Comptoir' assures the Chortitza Area Administrative

Office that the money collected by the Chortitza Mennonites towards helping the militia, 86 rubles, 5 kopeks, has been sent to the local Governor-in-the-Treasury, and concerning this voluntary gift the Governor has informed the Comptoir that he will not neglect to communicate this to His Imperial Majesty. August 9, 1807. Assistant to the chief judge Disdarev. Secretary Jevlashev. Council registrar Beskrovny."

2) "From the New-Russian Treasury Office of the foreign colonies. To the Chortitza Area Administrative Office. Besides the reports of the eleventh of this month under No. 125, the 1000 rubles, 5 kopeks sent by the said Area Administrative Office from the landowners of the Chortitza Colony for the aid of the wounded soldiers have been sent by the Treasury Office to the treasurer of the Ekaterinoslav District for safe-keeping in the crown treasury until the money will be put to use in its appropriate place. The Area Administrative Office has been advised herewith concerning this on October 17, 1812. Member from Lau, Secretary N., Provincial Secretary Vaskov."

These two documents contain the most surprising information we have come to know about this matter from earliest times. We think that one million donated by all the Russian Mennonites of today would not be such a sacrifice as those 1000 rubles, 5 kopeks which that poor settlement brought. One should read what Heinrich Heese (#53) and Senator Contenius (#56) have written about their needy conditions. What has been done during the Crimean War, 1854-1855, and the war with Turkey, 1877-1878, we know from ##260-264.

On the occasion of the centennial of the granting of the "Gracious Letter"[82] or "Charter of Privileges" by Paul I, the Taurida Mennonites sent a letter expressing gratitude and loyalty to His Majesty and presented at the same time 5000 rubles to the Red Cross for the care of wounded and sick soldiers in China during the "Boxer Rebellion." Thereupon an imperial expression of thanks in the form of the highest commendation was sent to the address: (No. 4457, Office of the Governor of Taurida, Oct. 11, 1900).

During the Russo-Japanese War, 1904, the Mennonites of the Chortitza Volost, partly together with the Chortitza daughter colonies and estate owners, contributed 53,539 rubles, 75 kopeks for wounded and sick soldiers(?)[83] For 29,645 rubles the Chortitza Volost office received an imperial expression of thanks through the Governor of Ekaterinoslav, March 4, 1904; No. 1677. The Nikolaipol Volost donated 19,908 rubles, 14 kopeks. The Chortitza Volost gave 7037 rubles, 91 kopeks for 20 voluntary Mennonite medical orderlies, and the Nikolaipol Volost 1581 rubles, 65 kopeks for the same cause. Both volosts together contributed

82,127 rubles, 43 kopeks during the Russo-Japanese War. What the other Chortitza daughter colonies have contributed our statistitians could not report. During the famine years 1906-1908 the Mennonites of the Chortitza and Nikolaipol volosts, in conjunction with the daughter colonies and estate owners contributed: a) for the Russian population of the eastern provinces 2742 rubles, 50 kopeks, and in farm products 36,180 pounds of flour; b) for the Chortitza settlers in the Orenburg colonies 54,766 rubles, 21 kopeks, a total of 57,508 rubles, 71 kopeks.

During the Russo-Japanese War, 1904 and after (in 1904 the centennial jubilee of the Molotschna settlement was celebrated. See above "Home for the Aged") the Molotschna districts donated for wounded and sick soldiers (Red Cross, the Taurida Field Hospital, named after Empress Alexandra Feodorovna): a) the Halbstadt Volost 57,927 rubles of which 7473 rubles were raised by free-will collections, the rest was raised by various levies. Considerable sums, of which we do not have exact accounts, were also collected for voluntary Mennonite orderlies. Through a committee appointed by the volost much money was levied and distributed to the families of called-up reservists in the surrounding Russian villages. We do not know the exact amount, but it is somewhat larger than that of the Gnadenfeld District. b) The Gnadenfeld Volost, 1904 and after, 48,864 rubles, 54 kopeks to the Red Cross for wounded and sick soldiers, and to the Taurida Field hospital; for the support of reservist families 24,124 rubles, 46 kopeks. The Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld Districts sent linen, bedding, and clothing for the soldiers, more than 1200 items from the Gnadenfeld District; in addition large quantities (two carloads) of dry bread. The church congregations also have contributed directly to the Red Cross by means of collection boxes in the churches. In this work Elder H. Dirks of Gnadenfeld was especially interested and active. For many years he has been a member of the Society of the Russian Red Cross. Indeed, already during the Austro-Prussian War, 1866, he served, as graduate of the Barmen Mission House, the Good Samaritan cause as army chaplain of the Red Cross. Brother Dirks thinks that our churches devote too little interest to the cause, and quotes Matt. 5:13-16.

During the famine years, 1906-1908, the following statistically ascertained contributions came from the Molotschna districts: a) In April, 1906, the brethren Bernhard Epp, Lindenau; Jakob Willms, Petershagen; and Jakob Rempel, Rosenhof, personally brought a collection in the amount of 3950 rubles to the Kazan Province. Concerning this there are very warm letters of thanks to the Assembly of the Molotschna Mennonite Brotherhood from the Spassk District Council and other institutions. b) In the years 1907 and 1908, 57,845 rubles, 93 kopeks were raised by the Halbstadt Provisional Aid

Committee for the Molotschna and other districts[84] and used for the establishing of food kitchens among the Russians and Bashkirs in the Samara and Ufa provinces, except for 1850 rubles which were used for needy Mennonite settlers for whom other contributions and deliveries of flour and clothing were received. In this matter N. Dick, former teacher in Rueckenau, now deceased, has done much as member of the Belebei District Council. The brethren Johann Philipp Isaak and Wilhelm G. Sawatzky of Rueckenau were sent to establish the food kitchens.

In similar manner all other Mennonite groups have participated in times of war and famine, but most of the individual deeds remain statistically unknown. Thus, right at the beginning of the war in 1904 the small Crimean M.B. Church raised 500 rubles for the Red Cross, and correspondingly the two other parishes Karassan and Busau. The small Volost of Velikokniashesk, Kuban District, raised 1000 rubles. Considerable sums were contributed by the Molotschna settlements Schoenfeld, Sagradovka, Memrik, etc.

In the year 1905 the participation of the Mennonites in the national life manifested itself: a) in a letter by the spiritual elders of the Mennonite Churches in Russia expressing loyalty and gratitude to His Majesty apropos of His Highness's Manifesto concerning the "Confirmation of the Principles of Religious Tolerance" of April 17, whereupon His Majesty sent thanks through the Governor of Ekaterinoslav, July 2, 1905, No. 6575; b) in a similar letter by the Chortitza Volost apropos of His Majesty's Manifesto of Oct. 17, 1905, with the founding of two stipends for students out of their own midst at teacher training institutions; whereupon His Majesty sent thanks through the same Governor, June 27, 1906, No. 1463.

XL.
PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

§389 This chapter in our section on "intellectual cultural works" turns out to be short and modest. The first book published by the Mennonites in Russia, as far as we can learn, is the old *Gesangbuch* containing a collection of spiritual songs published for general edification and the praise of God. "I will sing unto the Lord," Ps. 104:33. After nine editions in Prussia, the tenth is the first in Russia. (Odessa; printed by the City Printing House, 1844.) This first edition was provided by the Molotschna Mennonite Council of Church Leaders. Later a number of imprints followed in which other hymns and a second part were added. In 1882 a hymnal commission by order of the General Conference published the new hymnal for church and home use in the Mennonite

churches in Russia. "Sing unto the Lord," Ps. 96:1, 2. (printed by P. Neufeld, Neu-Halbstadt, 1892.) Other editions have already followed. A second religious book in sequence was *Einfache Erklaerung* (Simple Explanation) (see above, ##30 and 58), Danzig, 1845. This was a small polemic work of the Kleine Gemeinde. The third book is *Konfession oder kurzes und einfaeltiges Glaubensbekenntnis derer so man nennt die vereinigte Flaemische, Friesische und Hochdeutsche Taufgesinnte Mennonitengemeinde* (Confession or a Short and Simple Confession of Faith of Those Called the United Flemish, Frisian, and High German Anabaptist Mennonite Churches); published by the Rudnerweide Church, South Russia, Odessa; printed by Franzov and Nitsche, 1853; with appended "Instruction" (Catechism) and Schedule of Prayers.[85] We do not know when the generally used *Katechismus oder kurze und einfaeltige Unterweisung aus der Heiligen Schrift, in Frage und Antwort, fuer die Kinder zum Gebrauch in den Schulen* (Catechism or Short and Simple Instruction in the Holy Scriptures in Question and Answer for the Use of Children in School), published by the Christian Anabaptist Church in Russia, called Mennonites, and printed by Kilius & Co., Berdiansk, 1874 (an exact imprint of the Prussian edition), was printed in Russia for the first time—in any case, it was published (?) long and repeatedly before 1874, as well as frequently after this. Likewise we do not know whether the appended *Glaubensbekenntnis der Mennoniten in Preussen und Russland* (Confession of Faith of the Mennonites in Prussia and Russia) has appeared in print before and after in this form. Essentially it was used thus in the Flemish churches according to handwritten pamphlets. In 1876 the M.B. Church, through Abram Unger, published its *Glaubensbekenntnis und Verfassung der glaeubig getauften und vereinigten Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde im suedlichen Russland* (Confession of Faith and Constitution of Baptized Believers and United Mennonite Brethren Church in South Russia), Einlage; available from A. Unger (see *#213*); printed by C. F. Spittler, Basel. The so-called Mennonite (older majority) churches wrote a common, revised *Glaubensbekenntnis der Mennoniten in Russland* (Confession of Faith of the Mennonites in Russia), printed by P. Neufeld, Halbstadt, 1898. In 1902 the M.B. Church had its revised *Glaubensbekenntnis der Vereinigten Christlichen Taufgesinnten Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde in Russland* (Confession of Faith of the United Christian Anabaptist M.B. Church in Russia) also printed by Peter Neufeld. These mentioned works are essentially all of the official publications by the churches of the Russian Mennonites.

The first pedagogical publications known to us are the familiar *150 Rechentafeln* (150 Arithmetic Tables) and the *Chorale Book* by Heinrich Franz, chiefly for use in the Mennonite schools in Southern Russia. Both

works must have been printed about 1850, probably in Leipzig by Breitkopf und Haertel, with whom the second edition of the *Chorale Book* appeared in 1880. Later a somewhat modified *Chorale Book* by Wilhelm Neufeld was printed by P. Neufeld in Neu-Halbstadt. Several other chorale books and song books with melodies in ciphered notation have been published by Heinrich Janz, Jakob Reimer, and Bernhard Peters, and also the *Liederperlen*, periodically published by Isaak Born, Lichtfelde. The latter also published repeatedly a collection of songs, *Heimatklaenge*. *Liederperlen* and *Heimatklaenge* were printed by P. Neufeld and then by his successors. Later, *Kinderharfe* appeared by H. J. Braun. We have already mentioned a series of textbooks by Kornelius Unruh in association with other colleagues: Bible Knowledge, Bible Stories, Church History, German Grammar, German Reader, Reader for Secondary Schools. All except the "Grammar" were printed by P. Neufeld, Halbstadt, and later by his successors. A grammar by P. Harder was published by "Raduga."

Books and brochures in the field of Mennonite history written by Mennonites in Russia, according to our knowledge, are: *Geschichte der Mennoniten* (History of the Mennonites) by Martin Classen (see #258), published in 1875; *Erste Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus dem Danziger Gebiet nach Suedrussland* (First Emigration of the Mennonites from the Danzig Area to South Russia), from the posthumous papers of the deceased Peter Hildebrand, an early minister, Halbstadt, published by P. Neufeld, 1888; *The Chortitza Mennonites*, an endeavor to describe their course of development, by D. H. Epp, Rosental, near Chortitza, published by the author, Odessa, A. Schultze, 1889; *Unser Auszug nach Mittelasien* (Our Emigration to Central Asia), by Franz Bartsch, teacher at Lysanderhoeh, Province of Samara, Halbstadt, 1907, printer and publisher H. J. Braun; *The Molotschna Mennonites*, a contribution to their history from documents of former and recent times, as well as on the basis of personal experiences, by Franz Isaak (H. J. Braun, Halbstadt, Taurida, 1908); *Johann Cornies*, excerpts from his life and works, by D.H. Epp; *Der Botschafter* (The Messenger), Ekaterinoslav and Berdiansk, 1909; *The Memrik Settlement*, for its 25-year existence in the fall of 1910 by D. H. Epp, publishing house of the book shop of D. J. Warkentin, Kalinovo, Post Office Sherlannaia, Province of Ekaterinoslav, Berdiansk (Heinrich Ediger, 1910) *Pastor Eduard Wuest*, the great revival preacher in the German colonies in South Russia, by A. Kroeker, available at "Raduga," Halbstadt.

Devotional Literature. Of this genre we know the following: *Das Reich Gottes im Lichte der Gleichnisse* (The Kingdom of God in the Light of the Parables), written in form of sermons by Heinrich Dirks, elder of the Gnadenfeld Mennonite Church. Gnadenfeld near Halbstadt,

Province of Taurida, South Russia, available at P. Janzen; printed by Peter Neufeld, Neu-Halbstadt, 1892; *Predigt ueber Taufe, Abendmahl* (Sermon on Baptism, Lord's Supper) by Heinrich Dirks (printed by H. Lenzmann, Gross-Tokmak, 1904); *Kurze Erlaeuterungen zum Katechismus der christlichen taufgesinnten Gemeinden, so Mennoniten genannt werden* (Short Expositions on the Catechism of the Christian Anabaptist Churches, Called Mennonites) with the appendage *Kurze Uebersicht ueber Anfang und Entstehungsgang unserer Mennonitengemeinden* (Short Review of the Beginning and Nature of Origin of Our Mennonite Churches), by D. H. Epp, 1897 and 1899. Minister D. H. Epp, together with others, has also translated the above-named Mennonite Catechism into Russian and published it. *Im Heiligen des Vaterunsers* (In the Sanctuary of the Lord's Prayer), *Was will aus unsern Kindern werden?* (What Will Become of Our Children?), *Versucht wie wir* (Tempted as We Are), several sermons and other works by Jakob Kroeker, available at "Raduga," Halbstadt were also published (?). An attempt at a series of issues of Mennonite sermons and sermon outlines could be continued for only a short time. Several sermons by Jakob Reimer, Rueckenau; Jakob Kroeker; Elder David Duerksen, Crimea; Jakob Friesen, Rueckenau; and A. Wall appeared, and then the enterprise ceased. Jakob Kroeker has published two booklets of sermon outlines and plans under the title *Der Mitarbeiter* (The Co-Worker).

Poetry by Russian Mennonites has also been printed. Known to us are *Gedichte* (Poems) by Bernhard Harder (see below, "Mennonite Clergy," Harder's biography), by Johann Loewen, and by Gerhard Loewen. A number of significant poems in verse and free verse by Bernhard Peter Fast, as well as by Martin Fast and others have been printed in various periodicals in Russia and abroad.

Periodicals began to appear with Abram Jakob Kroeker's *Christian Family Calendar* for 1897, printed by P. Neufeld, Halbstadt. For the year 1911, 12,000 copies were printed. This calendar was followed by Jakob Johann Kroeker's *Christian Calendar* for 1899, which has been distributed for 1911 in 25,000 copies. The two Kroekers then published *Christian Almanac* from 1902 to 1905, which had success at first, but then was stopped. In 1903 however, the *Mennonite Almanac* by Elder Heinrich Dirks, Gnadenfeld, began to appear, and continues with good success. This publication is becoming more and more a valuable source for the history of the Mennonites in Russia. The mentioned ministers, A. and J. Kroeker, began to publish *Die Friedensstimme*, a semi-monthly Christian family newspaper, in 1903. At first the paper was printed abroad, but since the end of 1905 it has been published in Halbstadt. At present it appears twice weekly from "Raduga" under the editorship of J. and A. Kroeker; the publisher is H.J. Braun. On August 13, 1905, the

first issue of the *Botschafter* appeared in Ekaterinoslav with D.H. Epp as editor, after he had unsuccessfully applied for permission for several years. At present the newspaper appears weekly in two numbers. The *Botschafter* is now printed by Heinrich Ediger in Berdiansk; its editors are D.H. Epp and Heinrich A. Ediger; publisher is Johann Johann Thiessen, Ekaterinoslav (see above "Chortitza School Board" and "Bethany"). Both papers have found solid ground in wide levels of the Mennonite community in Russia. In the interest of the mission of the M.B. Church in Nalgonda (see #310), the missionaries in India began to publish the *Erntefeld* in 1900. At present it appears in a series of booklets under the editorship of missionary Abram Friesen. It is justly popular with friends of missions. It is printed by "Raduga" in Halbstadt. The most recent literary production is the periodical *Aufwaerts*, appearing in a series and printed in Leipzig, and edited by Kornelius G. Neufeld. At first it was dedicated to promote the cause of singing, but it gradually developed into a youth and folk paper similar in its sphere to the incomparable *Jugendblaetter* by Prelate Weitbrecht in Stuttgart. (Neufeld's address is Davlekanovo, Province of Ufa.)

We shall give some biographical information about the founders of Russian-Mennonite newspapers. As contemporaries we must of necessity treat them very briefly.

Abram Jakob Kroeker, minister, was born and raised in Rosenort, Molotschna. He was a student of Peter Holzrichter, the leader among the village school teachers of the Andreas Voth era. Kroeker's father was not willing to let him continue his studies, but upon urgent request he bought him some books for independent study. Not quite 18 years old, Kroeker became village school teacher. His salary was 12 rubles per month and free board, naturally only during the months of instruction when he would rotate among village homes. Convinced that this was not his real vocation, he resigned after six years and devoted himself again to farming. In 1889 he became a member of the M.B. Church. Soon he was asked to preach the Word. In 1890 and 1891 he took part in a month-long Bible course. From 1891 to 1894 Kroeker was itinernt preacher in Dobrudscha. Because of sickness in his young family he went to Spat, Crimea, in 1894, where he bought a farm and became a farmer. Earlier already he had written various well-received articles for different newspapers, including several in *Waechter Unterm Kreuz* (Watchman under the Cross). With great hesitation and under much opposition he published his first *Christliche Familienkalender* (Christian Family Calendar) in 1897. In 1903 together with H.J. Braun, minister, and others, he bought the printing shop of P. Neufeld in Halbstadt. Later the joint owners organized the company "Raduga" for the purpose of printing, publishing and selling books. They bought Jakob



a) Minister Abram J. Kroeker, Editor of the *Friedensstimme*.



b) Minister David H. Epp, Editor of the *Botschafter*.

Loetkemann's well-established book store in Halbstadt in 1904 and also brought the book store of David P. Isaak, Schoenwiese, into partnership.

Jakob Johann Kroeker, minister, a pupil of Peter P. Siemens, who has already been mentioned repeatedly, passed the Russian public school teacher's examination and taught school for several years. Later he graduated from the four-year course of the Hamburg seminary and began his activity as minister and author (see #251, M.B. Church, Spat, Schoental).

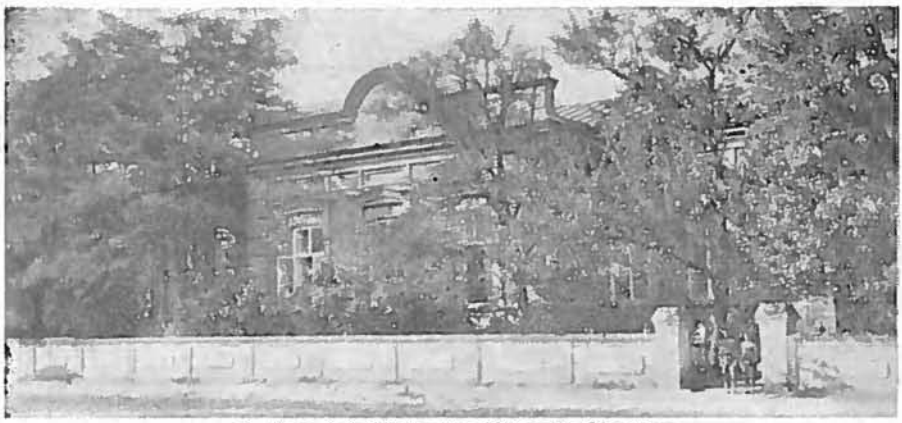
The particulars of David Heinrich Epp, minister, are given above under "School," Chortitza District, and below under "Mennonite Clergy." His work as author and journalist has been sketched in this chapter.

Elder Heinrich David Dirks, editor of *Mennonite Almanac*, is well-known to us as missionary and preacher; likewise missionary Abram Johann Friesen, editor of *Erntefeld*.

The particulars of Heinrich Jakob Braun, director of the trade and publishing company "Raduga," are to be found under "Mennonite Clergy," M.B. Church, Rueckenau; those of Kornelius G. Neufeld, minister, editor of *Aufwaerts*, above under "School at Davlekanovo" (#353, XIII). Heinrich Abram Ediger, second editor of the *Botschafter* and proprietor of a print shop and book store, is a graduate of the Gnadenfeld Secondary School and was a teacher for some time. In Berdiansk he has been active for many years in city government as mayor or in other positions. For Johann Johann Thiessen, see above, "Chortitza School Board" and "Bethany," and further under "Industry."

Mennonite printing shops in Russia, as far as we know, are those of: the firm "Raduga," Halbstadt, founded by P. Neufeld; H.A. Ediger in Berdiansk; Hermann A. Lenzmann in Gross-Tokmak; and A.P. Friesen in Davlekanovo.

Distribution of Books and Periodicals. Especially known to us as ardent disseminators of Christian and educational literature in former times, about 1830 and later, are: David Epp, minister in Chortitza and Jakob Martens, minister in Tiegenhagen, Molotschna, about 1830 to 1860 (see also above Tobias Voth, Johann Cornies, Heinrich Heese, and others, "Literary Society," *##40, 324*). As seller as well as agent for orders and subscriptions Isaak Fast, Gnadenfeld, has distributed a large amount of Christian devotional, instructive and entertaining literature, books and newspapers. In this regard Ohrloff, Gnadenfeld, and the "Brotherhood" in the Molotschna (see *##38-44ff*) have done very much; in the Chortitza District, a book seller, Borm; then Johann Epp,



a) Area Administrative Offices in Chortitza.



b) Area Administrative Offices in Halbstadt (rear view).



c) Area Administrative Offices in Velikokniashesk (Wohldemfuerst), Kuban.



d) Old Mennonite estate home in Southern Russia (Juschanlee).



e) Modern Mennonite estate home in southern Russia (Steinbach).



f) Modern Mennonite home in Neu-Halbstadt.

Abram Unger (Einlage), and Riegel, his colporteur and successor in the book trade. Book stores at present are: "Raduga," Halbstadt, founded by Jakob Loetkemann, with its branch in Schoenwiese under P. Isaak; Heese and Epp, Chortitza; Toews and Penner, Gnadenfeld, founded by Peter Janzen; Helmut A. Janzen, Tiege, Molotschna; Jakob Friesen, Tiege, Sagradovka; D.J. Warkentin, Kalinovo, Memrik; Abram P. Friesen, Davlekanovo, Province of Ufa; Peter Klassen, Spat, Crimea; and Johann Janzen, Karassan. These certainly are not the only places where books are sold among the Mennonites.

The whole work of distributing the Russian-Mennonite literature and writings has begun remarkably late. It is extremely modest for a hundred-year existence of the Mennonites in Russia in relatively great affluence and high, though agriculturally-based, culture. Yet it exists, has created its own forms and established a firm basis, and has become natural and indispensable to the community. The entire area of the business, social, cultural, pedagogical, and religious life expresses itself through an indigenous, local press, especially through the periodical. Every denomination, as well as every level in the community is represented: the small man and the simple farmer, as well as the industrialist and large land owner; the lay preacher and the ordinary teacher, as well as the trained expert in the various specialties—all appear in the press together with correspondences, reports, dissertations, fiction, and polemical articles. Thus the entire future territory of unlimited possibilities of growth and self-improvement belongs to the young Mennonite literature. In a large measure the wholesome but also the unwholesome future development of the community depends upon it, as well as upon school and pulpit, depending on whether Samuel or Eli's sons will serve in the sanctuary of the press.

J.

GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION AND ECONOMIC-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MENNONITES OF RUSSIA FROM 1860 TO 1910

XLI.

GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION AND ACQUISITION OF LAND

A. *Condition of the Colonies in 1860*

§390

The following Mennonite colonies existed in South Russia in 1860:[1] 1) The Chortitza District, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav, Post Office Chortitza,[2] or "The Old Colony." At that time the district included Schoenwiese and Kronsgarten, which at present belong to the Petrovsky Volost in the Alexandrovsk District or else to the Jossifov Volost, Novomoskovsk District. It numbered 18 villages at that time, (without Alt-Kronsweide, which had only four farmsteads because most of the farmers had moved away because of unsuitable conditions and had founded Neukronsweide, or simply Kronsweide). In 1910 the rest of Alt-Kronsweide was sold to "Bethany." The Old Colony now has 32,988 dessiatines crown land and 4,850 dessiatines privately owned land bought by individual villages. 2) Bergtal District. Those who had moved from Chortitza and settled in the Mariupol District, 1836 to 1852, in five villages, among them several families from the Molotschna. 3) Molotschna District with 53 villages and four estates: Steinbach, Felsental, Juschanlee, and Fabrikerwiese, thus 57 localities. In addition there were two Hutterite villages, Huttertal and Johannesruh in the Melitopol District which administratively belonged to the Molotschna Mennonite region. These three or four groups of colonies of 78 villages, 82 localities, possessed 163,000 dessiatines of crown land and more than 100,000 dessiatines privately-owned land in 1860. According to Klaus, *Unsere Kolonien*, p. 334, the amount was approximately 122,000 in 1865. They thus had the hereditary use of crown land and privately owned land of approximately 265,000 dessiatines. The private land owners or estate owners lived scattered on quite a large number of estates or large farms, mainly in the districts of Melitopol, Ekaterinoslav, and Alexandrovsk. With a Mennonite population of 32,000 in round numbers, 20,000 in the Molotschna District and 12,000 in the Chortitza District, or 6500

families, this meant 8¼ dessiatines per person or 40 dessiatines per family on the average. How disproportionally the crown land or community land was distributed among the individual families is indicated above, #56, 3d. These constituent elements of the settlement were reduced through the emigration in 1874 by the following: the entire Bergtal District and the two Hutterite villages. These colonies were bought by Lutheran and Catholic colonists and by Russian peasants. Huttertal and Johannestal now belong to the Tashchenak Volost. Thus the land in possession of the Mennonites was reduced by approximately 10,000 dessiatines. The number of dessiatines stated above, however, had naturally increased by more than this by 1874.

B. *New Settlements after 1860*

1. Daughter Colonies of the Chortitza District

§391 A. Leasehold Colonies

1) Tschornoglas: Gerhardstal, leasehold colony in the Russian Volost of Novopokrovskaia, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav, Post Office Nikolaipol; established 1860; land—1000 dessiatines; standard farm—50 dessiatines, half farm—25 dessiatines; population—130, families—25.[3]

2) Grossfuerstenland: leasehold colony of 6 villages on the land of the Grand Duke Michael Nikolaievich in the Russian Volost Verchny-Rogatschik, Melitopol District, Province of Taurida, Post Office Verchy-Rogatschik. Founded 1864 (Georgstal, etc.) to 1870 (Sergeievka). Land—7001 dessiatines; full farm—50 dessiatines; half farm—25 dessiatines; population—1000, families—200 approximately.

3) Nepliuievka: 2 villages, Steinau and Blumenfeld in the Russian Volost of Alexaievska, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav; Post Office Nikopol. Founded 1870; land—4000 dessiatines; full farm—50 dessiatines; half farm—25 dessiatines; population—550, families—100.

4) Kusmitzky: Alexandrovka, Volost of Saksaganskaya, District of Verchnedneprovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav; Post Office Saksagan. Founded—(?); land—nearly 1800 dessiatines; full farm—50 dessiatines; half farm—25 dessiatines; population—200, families—40.

§392 B. Settlements of lands which were bought by the Chortitza Volost[4] and then through repayment came to be owned by the settlers.

1) Jasykovo: 6 villages, own Volost Nikolaipol, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav. Founded—1869 (Nikolaipol) to 1872 (Hochfeld); land—8655 dessiatines, in addition 961 dessiatines bought directly from private persons; farm norm—50 dessiatines, purchase

price—33 rubles per dessiatine; population—2200 (approximately), families—440.

2) Baratov: 2 villages, Neuchortitza and Gnadental; Volost Marianovskaia, District of Verchnedneprovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav; Post Office Sofievka. Founded—1872; land—3631 dessiatines, purchase price—33 rubles; farm norm—50 dessiatines; population—850, families—170.

3) Scheliachtin: 2 villages, Gruenfeld and Steinfeld; Volost Vesselotiernovskaya, District of Verchnedneprovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav, Post Office Vesselotiernovskaya. Founded—1874; land—4000 dessiatines; purchase price—40 rubles; farm norm—50; population—about 1000, families—about 200.

4) Ignatievo: 7 villages (New-York—church building of the Mennonite Church, secondary school, school for girls; Nikolaievka—church building of the M.B. Church, private intermediate school; Ignatievka, etc.); Volost Sheliesnianskaia (6 villages; New-York alone belongs to the Volost Santurinovskaia), District of Bachmut, Province of Ekaterinoslav. Post Office New-York. Founded—1889 to 1890; land—14,125 dessiatines, of these 1123 dessiatines rent land or fund for the purchase of new land for future generations; purchase price—65 rubles; farm norm—60 dessiatines; population—1400, families—280.

5) Dieievka: 14 villages (Chortitza; Dieievka, Mennonite Church by the same name; Kamenka—church building of the M.B. Church; Pretoria—Secondary School) in the common Volost Kiptshakskaia, District and Province of Orenburg, Post Office Dieievka. Founded 1894-1901; land--25,581 dessiatines, of these 2985 dessiatines rent land; purchase price—30 rubles, farm norm—60 dessiatines; population—2700, families—540.

6) Arkadak: 7 villages (up to the present 1910: Vladimirovka, etc.); Volost Arkadakskaia, District of Balaschov, Province of Saratov, Post Office Arkadak. Founded—1910; land—9413 dessiatines; rent land—363 dessiatines; farm norm—50 dessiatines; purchase price—172 rubles; population—about 600, families—120; the settlement is still open to new-comers.

C. Settlements of Chortitza Mennonites on Purchased Land §393

1) Borsenko: 6 villages, Nikolaital, Felsenbach, etc., own Volost Novosofievskaia, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav, Post Office Nikopol; since 1865-1866; land—6137 dessiatines, purchase price—30 rubles; farm norm—50 dessiatines; population—600, families—120.

2) In the Volost Natalievskaia, District of Alexandrovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav, Post Office Alexandrovsk; Andreasfeld, since 1870; land—1000 dessiatines; population—60, families—12. Neuschoenwiese, since (?); land—1296 dessiatines; population—100, families—20. Eugenfeld, since (?); land—1600 dessiatines; population—100, families—20.

3) Neurosengart and Kronsfeld: Volost Bielenskaia, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav, Post Office Chortitza; since 1878, and 1883 respectively; 632 dessiatines; purchase price—176 rubles; farm norm—12; population—250, families—50. These two villages have bought their land from the Farmers' Bank after having been renters of long standing. Besides this land they are probably farming some rent land.

4) Miloradovka and Jekatarinovka: Volost Alexandrovskaia, District of Verchnedneprovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav, Post Office Bozhedarovka; since 1889; land—2100 dessiatines, purchase price—65 rubles; population—200, families—40.

5) Borissovo: 2 villages, Kondratievka and Nikolaipol (not to be mistaken for Nikolaipol, Jasykovo); Volost Santurinovskaia, District of Bachmut, Province of Ekaterinoslav, Post Office Druzhkovka; since 1892; land—5100 dessiatines, purchase price—85; farm norm—50; population—400, families—80.

6) Naumenko: 3 villages in the District of Isium, Province of Kharkov: Grigorievka, Volost Barvenkovskaia, Post Office Barvenkovo; Vassilievka, volost and post office of former; Petrovka, Volost Prelestenskaia, Post Office Bantashevo. All three villages since 1890; land—5317 dessiatines, purchase price—80; population—450, families—90.

7) Central: village Central, Volost (?), District of Novochopersk, Province of Voronezh, Post Office Novochopersk; since 1909; land—2725 dessiatines, purchase price—190 rubles; population—150, families—30. Settlement still open.

8) Sadovaia: village Anna, Volost Sadovskaia, District of Bobrov, Province of Voronezh; Post Office Anna; since 1909; land—5945 dessiatines, purchase price—285 rubles; population—200, families—40. Settlement still open.

§394

D. Settlements on Land held by the Corporate Body in Siberia

In the years from 1907 to 1910 about 200 families from the Chortitza colonies have moved onto such land, most of them with assistance from

the mother community in the amount of 40 rubles per person and 150 rubles per family. Later still other considerable sums have gone to the support of these settlements (see "Molotschna Settlements").

Besides these regularly-established Chortitza settlements there are still others. Thus—the leasehold colony Alexanderheim near the city of Saizevo (Old Colony and Molotschna); Friedensfeld, a village of land owners, District of Ekaterinoslav, in which at present probably over half are Old Colony people; the model farmers of the Chortitza Mennonites in the Hebrew Colonies, District of Kherson; Wiesenfeld and Blumenhof in the District of Pavlograd, Province of Ekaterinoslav; and the large number of little villages, large farms and estates on rented or purchased land. We could not think of locating all of them. The main settlements and their nature we have given above, thanks to the kindness of the Chortitza Volost administration in supplying us with this and much other statistical material.

The Colony Administrators and Secretaries of the Districts of Chortitza and Nikolaipol §395

a) Chortitza Colony administrators: Peter Siemens, Chortitza, 1801-1805. (In the letter of a traveller (see *##66* and *67*) a certain Siemens is mentioned as builder of the church in Ohrloff in 1809, who had already been administrator in Chortitza for 17 years. How was it before 1801? Did the "deputies" then administer the colonies?); Nikolai Krahn, Peter Siemens (the same one as above ?), 1808—1823; Isaak Toews, Jakob Penner, Peter Loewen, Jakob Bartsch—Rosental, 1832-1838; Jakob von Kampen, Jakob Bartsch—Rosental (the same one as above?), 1841-1854; Jakob Siemens, Jakob Dyck, Jakob Hamm, Heinrich Martens, 1869-1872; Jakob Braun, Isaak Lehn, Peter Andres, Johann Hildebrand—Chortitza Island, 1881-1887; Franz Thiessen, Peter Dyck, Heinrich Froese, Peter Thiessen, Kornelius Martens, Peter Koop, Jakob Wiebe—Rosengart, 1905-1908; Johann Huebert, Jakob Wiebe of Rosengart (the same one as above?), since Sept. 1, 1909. b) Chortitza Area Administrative Secretaries: Jakob von Kampen, 1801-1811 (and earlier?); Gerhard Penner, Heinrich Heese, 1813-1813; Gerhard Penner, 1814-1818; Heinrich Heese, 1818-1829; Gerhard Penner, 1830-1845; Wilhelm Penner, Abram Unrau, secretary of the Agricultural Society from 1830 to 1843, assistant to the Area Administrative Secretary from 1843 to 1848, Area Administrative Secretary from 1848 to 1876; Johann Epp, assistant to the secretary, 1867-1876, secretary, 1876 to his death in 1888; Jakob Klassen, assistant secretary, 1873-1888, secretary up to the present (Dec. 1910); David Penner, bookkeeper of the Area Administrative Office, 1896 to the present; Heinrich Heese, assistant secretary, 1877-1896, secretary of the Volost Court, 1896 to the present.

c) Nikolaipol (Jasykov) Area Administrators since 1874: Abram Wieler, Kornelius Lehn, Johann Penner, Abram Enns, Franz Peters, Aron Lehn, Peter Peters, Daniel Peters, Johann Schellenberg and Johann Klassen. d) Nikolaipol District Secretaries: Wilhelm Dyck (see "Ministers of the M.B. Church"), P.J. Penner (see "Chortitza Secondary School") and Peter Peters.

§396 2. The Molotschna Colonies at Present (1910)

A. 1. After 1860 four more villages were added to the 53 villages and 4 farmsteads in the Molotschna District: Mariawohl, in the present Gnadenfeld Volost, Klippenfeld and Hamberg (in the 1860s), and Kuruschan comprised of estates on lands held by small farmers 1909, in the Halbstadt Volost. The Halbstadt Volost at present numbers 31 villages and 3 farmsteads; the Gnadenfeld Volost, 26 villages and 1 farmstead—a total of 61 localities. These two Molotschna Districts possess 120,000 dessiatines of former crown lands.

2. Area Administrators and secretaries of the Molotschna Districts: a) Administrators of the single "Molotschna Mennonite District": Klaas Wiens (founder of Steinbach), 1804-1806; Johann Klassen, Rosenort (founder of the Halbstadt cloth factory), 1806-1809; Gerhard Reimer, Johann Klassen—Rosenort (the same as above?), 1812,1815; Peter Toews, Gerhard Enns, Johann Klassen—Ohrloff, Johann Klassen—Tiegerweide, Johann Regehr—Schoensee, 1833-1842; Abram Toews, Tiege, 1842-1848; David Friesen, Halbstadt, 1848-1865; Franz Dyck, Blumenort (see "Ohrloff Secondary School"), 1865-1867; Abram Driedger, Kornelius Toews—Tiege, 1868-1873 (in 1870 the "Molotschna Mennonite District" was divided into the Mennonite Districts of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld, and renamed as volosts); Abram Wiebe, Lichtenau, 1873-1879; Peter Dueck, Klaas Enns—Fabrikerwiese, 1882-1885; Johann Enns—Ohrloff, 1885-1889; Klaas Enns—Fabrikerwiese (same as above), Peter Neufeld, 1889-1899; Franz Nickel, 1899-1906 (?); Dietrich Dyck, 1906 (?) to the present (1910). b) Halbstadt Area Administrative Secretaries as far as ascertained: Gerhard Martens, Peter Harder, Johann Fast, Herman Janzen (see above "Ohrloff Secondary School"), Johann Trenkenschu, Johann Wilmsen (bookkeeper for about 40 years), Herman J. Fast. c) Gnadenfeld Area Administrators: Wilhelm Ewert, Grossweide, 1870-1871; Franz Penner (1871); Peter Ewert—Rudnerweide, Gerhard Fast, Peter Ewert (same as above); David Unruh, 1878-1887; Gerhard Duerksen—Alexandertal, 1887-1904; Jakob Duerksen (brother to the latter) up to the present (Dec. 1910). d) Gnadenfeld secretaries: Johann Kludt, 1870-1906 (?), Heinrich Salomon Ediger, for many years assistant secretary, up to the present.



a) Old farm yard in Chortitza.



b) Modern farm yard in Chortitza.



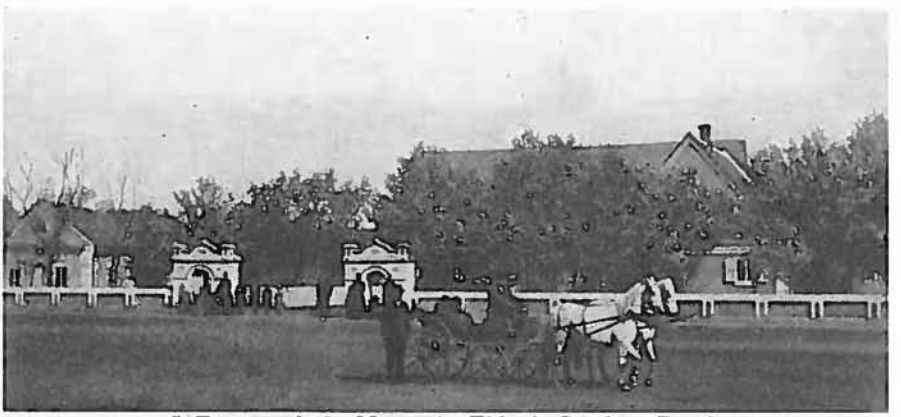
c) Old building on small farm yard near Chortitza.



d) Farm of Johann Wiebe in Ohrloff (formerly Johann Cornies, Sr.).



e) Old farm yard in Rueckenau, Molotschna.



f) Farm yard of a Mennonite Elder in Southern Russia.

B. Daughter Colonies of the Molotschna §397

A. There are a large number of leasehold colonies in the Crimea. Probably the most important and most flourishing village in the Crimea is Annovka near Kurman, Kemeltschi, founded on a Christian-social basis by Peter Janzen, especially in the interest of poor renters. Other colonies are in the Provinces of Ekaterinoslav, Kherson and others; in the Don territory; in the north-east provinces between the Volga and the Ural Mountains; in anterior Caucasia (Tempelhof since 1866); and in South-western Siberia. Their number, names, population and land area we have not been able to determine. Their population is calculated in the other groupings: in the parishes enumerated below, in the local volosts, as well as in the assessment districts of the forestry administration. Leasehold farmers often achieve considerable prosperity; some remain renters, others become owners. Not especially many Mennonites are large renters with hundreds of dessiatines of land.

B. Colonization of the Molotschna Mennonites on Crown Lands Outside the Mother Colony §398

1) Crimea. Such a settlement of 5 villages, Ettigerbrunn and others, took place in 1862. This settlement had a very difficult course of development, and dissolved as a crown colony through sale and purchase. Afterwards, however, the Mennonite colonies in the Crimea achieved great prosperity. Ettingerbrunn has been sold to non-Mennonite colonists. At present the village of Karassan is the most important Mennonite center in the Crimea: first church building of the Crimean Mennonite Church, and Secondary School. Post Office Karassan, Province of Taurida. Further information about the Mennonites in the Crimea follows under "Colonization on Purchased Land" and "Church Statistics," etc.

2) Kuban. This settlement has been treated in detail in #173 above.

3) Turkestan. Several dozen Molotschna families settled in 1880 jointly with "Volga" Mennonites (see above #258 and further below).

4) Olgino and Romanovka. Have their own volost. Olgino, District (?), Province of Stavropol; Post Office Vorontsovo-Alexandrovskaie since 1895; land—4500 dessiatines; at the time of settlement, 80 families. It is to be noted here that 50 families in Romanovka, former Separatists ("Templers"), who had previously lived in Orbelianovka near Tempelhof, were also called Mennonites by imperial decree. They performed their military duty on a general basis, not with the Mennonites. The 30 families of settlers in Olgino were originally Mennonite "Templers," who had formerly lived in Tempelhof (see #52, g, and #160(3)).

§399 C. Colonization of Molotschna Mennonites on lands which were purchased by the Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld Volosts and then by means of repayment became the property of the settlers.

1) Sagradovka: 16 villages, own Volost Ohrloff, District and Province of Kherson, Post Office Tiege; most important villages: Ohrloff, after which the volost is named; Tiege, seat of the volost administration, church building of the M.B. Church, the residence of the doctor, and location of the drug store and post office; Nikolaifeld, church building of the Mennonite Church; and Neuschoensee, site of the Ohrloff Secondary School. Land—20,789 dessiatines, purchase price—23 rubles; farm norm—65 (32½) dessiatines; at present, full farms—136, half farms—342, landless families—149, population—3081, families—627. This low figure, after 5000 inhabitants had been reported for a long time, can be explained by the many transfers of population in recent times.

Area Administrators of the Ohrloff-Sagradovka Volost: Heinrich Suckau, David Martens, Klaas Kroeker, Jakob Warkentin, Jakob Reimer (17 years, presently Area Administrator of the Volost Orlovskaia in Siberia), Abram Bergen, Johann Koehn, Heinrich Derksen, presently (1910) representative of the Area Administrator N. Dickmann. Secretaries: Adolf Ei, Bernhard Fast since 1876 to the present. These and other data we owe to the kindness of the Ohrloff Volost Administration.

1a) Daughter colonies of the Ohrloff-Sagradovka Volost. a) Suvorovka: originally a leasehold colony on the land of the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievich near the railroad station Suvorovskaia; 2 villages, Nikolaifeld and Grossfuerstental; common Volost Kanglynskaia, District of Alexandrovsk, Province of Stavropol, Post Office Tempelhof; since 1894; at present the land has been purchased by the renters jointly with people from the Molotschna and with assistance from the Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld Volosts; at the beginning the number of settler families stood at 80. b) Trubetzkoie: leasehold colony on the land of Prince Trubetzkoy; 2 villages, Novo-Nikolaievka and Volodievka; Kasatzkaia Volost, District and Province of Kherson, Post Office Kasatzkaia; since 1904; population, 400, families, 80. c) Barnaul: settlement of Sagradovka Mennonites on land held in common in Siberia; own Volost Orlovskaia, District of Barnaul, Province of Tomsk, Post Office Karasuk; 17 villages, in which also people from Chortitza and Molotschna have settled, Orlov, Chortitza, Halbstadt, Gnadenfeld, etc.; since 1909.

2) Memrik: Molotschna settlement, 10 villages: Memrik, Kalinovo, church building of the Mennonite Church, Kotliarevka, church building of the M.B. Church, etc.; Volost Galizynskaia, District of Bachmut, Province of Ekaterinoslav, Post Office Zhelannaia; since 1885; land,

11,999 dessiatines, rental land, 1000 dessiatines; purchase price, 50 rubles; farm norm, 60 (30) dessiatines; population, 3600, families, 600. (In this case the statistical material at our disposal is full of contradictions.) N.B! Colonization groups such as Ignatievo, Memrik, and others which do not constitute an independent volost have as a rule their authorized agent or representative through whom they protect their common legal interests.

2a) Memrik Daughter Colony: established in 1903 in the Natalinskaia Volost, District of Novousensk, Province of Samara. On 2550 dessiatines (purchase price, 80 rubles) 21 full farms[5] of 50 dessiatines each and 60 half farms at 25 dessiatines were established; rent land, 183 dessiatines. All farmers on half farms, however, found it impossible to make ends meet because of poor soil and bad climatic conditions, and also because of an insufficient amount of land. Experts in the matter think that there was a lack of unified support on the part of the Memrik mother colony: each Memrik village was individually responsible to care for the people who had moved out from it. By 1909 the last of those on half farms had left the settlement. The land is rented out. Rovnopol, the village of full farms, however, has struggled through to a thriving existence.

3) Neu-Samara: Molotschna settlement, 12 villages in the common Volost Jumutantabynskaia, District and Province of Samara, Post Office Pleshanovskoie; villages: Bogomasov, Pleschanovo, church building of the Mennonite Church, Lugovsk, church building of the M.B. Church, Podolsk, etc.; since 1890; land, 22,000 dessiatines, purchase price, 43 rubles; population, 2600; families, 500.

4) Molotschna, Orenburg: 8 villages, common Volost Kipschakskaia, District and Province of Orenburg, Post Office Pokrovskoie; villages: Alissovka, Karaguy, Stepanovka—church building of the Nikolaiev Mennonite Church, Kamyschevo—church building of the M.B. Church; since 1898 (?); land, 11,000 dessiatines; purchase price, 34 rubles; population, 2000 (?); families, 400 (?).

5) Terek: 15 villages in the common Volost Kisiurtskaia, District of Chassav-Jurt, Terek Region, Post Office Chassav-Jurt; since 1901; villages: Wanderlo, Chartsch—church building of the Mennonite Church; Talma—church building of the M.B. Church; land, 24,800 dessiatines; purchase price, 42 rubles; farm standard, 80 (40) dessiatines; population, (?).

§400 D. Success and Failure of the Molotschna Settlements on Volost Land

While Sagradovka after long and hard struggles and Memrik quite rapidly rose to solid prosperity, the settlement in Samara progressed slowly and the one in Orenburg with great difficulty up to the present, so that many settlers again and again required assistance from the home districts, but still could not achieve prosperity. Many are leaving their settlement and looking for land in Siberia. The Terek settlement, however, can be called a terrible fiasco. Soil conditions, the need for artificial irrigation, water conditions, the floods from mountain water and sea water caused by continuing east winds on the Caspian Sea in the estuary of the river, climatic conditions, the dying of hundreds of settlers from swamp fever, and the proximity of semi-civilized predatory nomads (Obreks), who always frighten and harm not only through theft of cattle, money and possessions, but also through murder and systematic kidnapping in order to extort ransom—all this hinders the colony in its struggle for existence. Many are also fleeing from here to Siberia. The thousands given in support by the Molotschna in money, food stuffs, and clothing could not save the colony. It was maintained that this help always came too late. At present, December 1910, the liquidation of the settlement has begun through the mortgaging of the land with the intention of providing for the settlers in some other way. Not only the poor "landless," who make up the majority of the settlers, but also many of those who had been well-to-do, who settled as full farmers, have been ruined. The accusations directed by "impartial experts" against the administrative groups of the parent districts are relentless and unlimited. We cannot enter into an investigation of the question because we lack expert knowledge. The last two settlements by the great body, famous for centuries as an agricultural society have not brought profit, honor, and joy either to the home community or to the settler community. Where does the fault lie? Has the community exhausted itself? Far from it! But as a pale mist slowly rising on the horizon in the hot early summer frightens the farmer because he fears that it might bring blight to leaf and blossom, so a feeling of anxiety for our existence, our economic and cultural worth in the future, stamps itself on the heart of the reflecting Mennonite on the observaion of this 20-year partial or complete failure of the Molotschna since the beginning of the Neu-Samara settlement. Some maintain that the settlers do not have enough perseverance, that they look too readily elsewhere, even to America, for assistance. When one is well-fed, warm and dry, it is easy to advise the poorly nourished, feverish, weak settler. On the other hand, it is said that the home administrations lack understanding and energy because the foundation is lacking, namely love and warm sympathy,

thus there is a disgust for the matter, a hurry to shake off the landless somehow, like bothersome, hostile beggars. The mutual hatred stemming from the time of the unfortunate "land quarrel" of a generation ago—this still unwritten "land affair"; that hatred which caused the landless to arm themselves with flails and pitch forks when they began to plow up the road used for freighting, though they did not strike or stab: their representatives and leaders calmed them; that hatred which caused the owners of full farms to arm themselves with the Russian rod in the fist of the hired non-Mennonite servant in the . . . Volost; that hatred which for many years manifested itself so actively and stubbornly in the relationships between the Molotschna and Sagradovka is still in the air. It has taken Sagradovka a long time to fight for its equality of birth. It has said its "And I?!" in good Low German and good Russian, in the written documents, in the face of its ungracious, noble Mother Molotschna, and the last word of the paternal government was again on the side of the landless. Is it possible that this hatred still exists after all the "revivals," "renewals," progress in matters of education and charity, emigrations, settlements? Certainly not consciously. But like a misfortune it lies on the soul of the community because there has not taken place a thorough cleansing of the corporate body through conscious repentance. (The representatives of the Old Testament people of God used to say, "We and our fathers have sinned!") Many sons and grandsons of the landless of that time belong to the "fathers" of the community, and vice versa there are sons and grandsons of the former owners of full farms among the endlessly suffering new settlers today. One cannot speak of a class hatred today. Others say it is a matter of limited vision: with the methods acquired in more than 100 years of farming between Altonau and Pastva, one ventures out to spend millions in far regions with unfamiliar conditions of nature and population without inquiring about the results of study with respect to agriculture and climate and other matters; yea, without recognizing this acquired knowledge, even ridiculing it, one sends out thousands of families on settlement adventures. Thus, millions in money are buried unproductively in swamp and stony soil before one has studied land and climate, and the livelihoods of thousands of one's own brothers and children are literally, prematurely buried in the same swampy and stony soil. Not even the business operations are carried out intelligently. One does not want to learn anything and can forget nothing. One does not want to believe that times and conditions change and that we must change with them. Many opponents of the Terek settlement spoke similarly and protested at its beginning, and today many more speak thus. For us personally this "Terekiad" means a big disappointment. As an observer interested solely in the view of the whole, we were firmly convinced that on the basis of all glowing accounts this settlement must become the pearl of

the Mennonite daughter colonies: a method of steppe farming, irrigation, animal husbandry on grassland and irrigation pastures, horticulture, vineyards, and fishing as industry—all this was in prospect here. And dozens of well-to-do practical farmers were full of the same hope and went with all they had, but instead of this—loss of millions. How much money, besides money for land purchase and support, how much strength and health, perhaps of whole generations, was lost! Graves, grief, resentment (hate!?). Where does the fault lie? In no way do we believe in the direct ethical transgressions of individual persons. In the administrative agents, as well as in all groups of men, we saw and still see men of first-class integrity as Christians: farmers, financiers, heads of families and managers of households, fathers and advisers in their home villages and in the spiritual community. "But," it is said, "as soon as a man receives a commission in the district he becomes someone else; each one is pulled down by the whole into limitations, selfishness, cold-heartedness, insecurity. One no longer recognizes our committee members and other officials as the same persons whom we knew at home. As individuals and in the intimate circle of home they understand and can do everything, are persons of highest quality, but together they are insignificant and unsatisfactory!" That is, we, a significant part of the more than four-centuries-old evangelical brotherhood, that corporate body whose moral and social consciousness is founded upon evangelical concepts, lack brotherliness, an enthusiastic sense of social responsibility, indeed, the essence of that which our name "brotherhood" signifies. May that be far from us! Where, then, would be our worth and our "mission of the ethical, social, and economic example" which Pastor Hans, as a quiet, intimate agent of higher circles (see *#278*), declared to be our God-given assignment, for the sake of which Empress Catherine II invited us, for the sake of which Totleben came to us, for the sake of which our great fatherly historical benefactor, the deceased Alexander II, put his hand on the wheel of history and legislation in order to preserve our status as non-combatants? Now, when in all of Russia all levels and ranks are shaken to their foundations, when every nerve of the land is tense because of the land question, should a major part of the Mennonite people fail in its centuries-old proven wisdom, perseverance, loyalty, and success in relation to agricultural and social matters? No. That is only a phase, a deadlock which grows out of having formerly temporarily forgotten that which was wise and just, that which was the virtue of our fathers and the basic principle of our community—all of which was caused by mutual sin in the evil "land matter." Away with the convenient, narrow-minded routine! New times, new methods, new men! As members of the passing generation we appeal to the maturing generation! You young men who, with clear eye and honest, strong heart, stand on the threshold of life, do your duty! Do not plow under the

hedges: plow a new field. Is there no Cornies, may we ask, no Cornies for our time and circumstances? Are the Mennonite gospel elements and the Cornies cultural elements, which have become fused with us Russian Mennonites, no longer active as sources of life? Far be it from us! Old experience and youthful knowledge, proven practice and rational theory, are they not abundantly at the service of the Russian Mennonites? Is God no longer gracious towards us? Has the sap of our roots dried up? No! Therefore, whether young or old, whoever feels strength, energy, love of neighbor for God's sake, the urge to work, consciousness of duty and a mind to save—let him go to work! God helps the courageous.

Da. An Observation from Life of the Economic, Cultural and Social Value of Successful Settlements §401

As an illustration of the reviving effect of successful settlements we shall here present the following piece of writing. We found it with some friends, a family on one of our numerous settlements, and upon our urgent request, we received permission to use it on condition of strictest anonymity. It shows how resettlement freed a family from hopeless poverty and brought it to a solid though modest prosperity. For the good of the community, two preachers, one a pedagogically trained teacher, the other a deacon, have emerged from the prospering double family. Altogether ten children of this family live in ordered, partly comfortable circumstances. We quote the piece of writing as a product of one of the sons, a simple farmer with elementary school education, and it is presented unchanged, except for a few grammatical corrections and some abbreviations of little significance to the reader, in order to leave the originality and vividness untouched. To the many biographical sketches of teachers, ministers, and other men of our society, let us also add this illustration, which depicts for us a real, rustic, family idyll. Hundreds of such accounts could be given concerning the successful new settlements and faithful work of our people. How infinitely sad by contrast is the "Terekiad." Our friends report:

A short biography of the life of our dearly beloved parents up to their silver wedding.

Upon the wish of my beloved father that I compose a biography of his life so that, on the occasion of his silver wedding and in the presence of dear friends and participants, he might be reminded of the grace and goodness of his Lord and Savior, I have attempted to secure a few notes about the life of my beloved parents. . . . Yet the sincerely loved parents as well as dear friends will be content if it is done very briefly and in great imperfection. . . . It is presented only out of grateful love for my parents. May the Lord add His blessing to it. Amen.

I shall let father speak himself. "I, who by God's grace can celebrate an anniversary and thanksgiving day, was born Dec. 10, 1836, in B. in very destitute circumstances, so that my stay in the parental house was not of long duration. Already in my sixth year, because of the extreme poverty of my dear parents, I had to leave my parental home and go to my foster parents, where I remained as a foster child until I was sixteen. I had to suffer much under various hardships. My foster father was an admirable man according to the understanding of that time. . . . I received virtually no Christian training. I had little schooling; that was of secondary importance, and there was little time for it.

"I remained with my foster parents until my sixteenth year. From then on I worked for farmers for pay. Here, too, I had to forego much that belongs to a happy youth. I spent much time in the transportation of freight during the Crimean War, where I came into various dangers threatening my life. However, the Lord, without whose will no hair falls from our head, stretched His protecting hand over me in an invisible and unknown way.

"My baptismal instruction falls into the hectic life on my many trips hauling freight. Each one can easily imagine how such instruction affected me, especially as the Spirit of God through the great goodness of God had awakened a longing for peace in my heart. I did not even attend public instruction, let alone private instruction. I was baptized in the year 1855 on the second day of Pentecost and married Miss Helena F. on Nov. 11, 1857, my first marriage.

"Because we were both orphans in addition to being without homes, our wedding took place at the home of my oldest brother. . . . After our wedding we could have rightly said, 'We had no place to lay our head.' And so our life began anew, yet enlivened with new hope and the fact that we were travelling the road together. During the first year after our marriage I served as second supervisor on the landed estate of Mr. R. . . . Because we moved from place to place in great poverty and under many hardships, my wife was often sick, sometimes near death. But the Lord helped again and again. . . . In 18__ the new settlement at N. was begun and so we decided to settle there. . . . Our trip took nine days and was connected with many difficulties because it rained much. On Nov. 20 we arrived soaked but safe in ____ka, where we took quarters for the winter. . . . From there, on the first of April 18__, we moved to our new settlement in S. I cannot describe the feeling of delight which cheered me; for finally, after much moving about, I had a place, which, according to human assumption I was to call my own after a time, where also we could feel happy with regard to material matters, even though our situation still had in no way particularly improved. And what does man not gladly give, or do without, when he cherishes a hope for the future

for himself and his family! But the Lord often drops gall instead of honey into man's lot; thus it was with us. With the many hardships of settling, the physical suffering of my dear wife increased from day to day. Yet the Lord had a hand in the matter, for the many ailments of my wife led me to a knowledge of myself until in the 18__ I finally found true peace and living faith in my eternal Redeemer and Savior. Now one might think that our happiness was assured. Yet something was missing, and that was the condition of my wife, who in her physical sickness could not get well in her soul. Then, shortly before her death the Holy Spirit and the love of Christ succeeded in bringing peace into her heart, and with this peace she passed into eternity in 1877, after a 14-day painful sickness. We had been married for 20 years and had had 9 children, of which three died in early childhood and six were alive. Driven by family conditions and in consequence of the impulse of my heart, which felt lonely through the death of my life's partner, I married for the second time, namely, the widow of the deceased J. L. of H., born Margareta W. . . . She brought four children into the second marriage, so that together we had ten children. The Lord granted us four more children, two of which He took unto Himself in their childhood, and two by the grace of God are alive today. Thus for a time we had twelve children."

Our dear mother also had to endure much in her childhood. Therefore we ask here for her own account. The mother:

"I was born in the year 18__, and my birthplace was T. But if the dear friends and guests expect to hear something joyful about my childhood, they will be disappointed when I begin the story with sad tidings, namely, the death of my mother. My coming into the world cost my mother her life, and so I was immediately left an orphan. What the word 'orphan' means, only those can imagine who have experienced it. O the love of a mother, my heart yearns for you! Come, calm my desires. Alas! She is gone. As a result I was put into the care of other generous people. Later my father remarried, so that my step-mother cared for me until my ninth year. . . . Then I lived with my aunt . . . where I spent my youth up to my twenty-first year. I married a young man, J. L. from K. . . . From there we moved in 18__ to the new settlement N., to the village H. Our married life was fraught with many difficulties and great poverty. In addition the Lord sent us physical suffering with which He afflicted us. We had six children, two of which died early in life. In 18__ my husband, too, passed through death into eternity."

Father continues, "Here begins our life together (in our second marriage) for which we by God's grace can have this celebration of gratitude towards God in the company of our dear children, relatives and

many close friends. . . . Twenty-five years ago we pledged faithfulness in the presence of God and many witnesses. Our wedding took place in the house of our dear neighbors H. in S., who have especially shown much love and kindness to me and my children during the time when my wife was ailing and also during my widowhood. This I shall always remember. May God reward them in eternity. So we started on our way together with ten children. We both had undertaken a large task, but we could be confident, for we could comfort each other with the words, 'The Lord is our shepherd and guide,' etc. We have also often experienced that He is strong in those who are weak. Strengthened by prayer and supplication, we undertook to accomplish our difficult task with joy, in that we sought together to lead our dear ones to the Lord in so far as He gave us strength. Our material circumstances improved somewhat. We sold the half farm which my wife owned in H. and improved ours in S. In 18__ we bought another half farm with a roomy house. However, for the second time the Lord had given me a physically ailing life's companion in order to show me that I could not be without a cross. In 18__ she was especially severely ill. . . . In our opinion she was dead . . . yet it pleased the Lord to let her be a further blessing to me and my family. . . . In time she recovered enough to leave the bed and take charge of the children again. . . . Yet her ailment increased. A malady was discovered which required an operation, for which we drove to Kharkov to the doctors Grube and Tobonkshiiev, but because Dr. Grube considered the operation highly dangerous, he advised against it and asked us to consider the matter seriously. Everyone can well imagine that we prayed much to the Lord for His answer. And so we regarded this as a sign from God and so without having achieved our purpose, and with good advice and a prescription from the doctor, and the hope that the malady would be stopped, we turned back home. Better health, thank God, has been partly achieved by means of the medicine and the help of the Lord. So we have been kept until now and are able to celebrate this commemoration, something that formerly seemed almost impossible. But our Lord remains a wonderful God. His ways are beyong finding out; it is incomprehensible how He reigns.

"In regard to our material circumstances we must say to the glory of God: the Lord has richly blessed us; even though not to excess, He has supplied the necessities; yea, He has blessed us beyond our asking and understanding. In every respect our hearts feel urged to worship our heavenly Father in Jesus Christ our Savior and to thank Him for His leading, His great love, mercy, and patience which He has shown towards us in the course of our past life. Today we want to erect an Ebenezer to Him. Through the strength and faithfulness of my Lord I may look back upon almost 67 years of my life, of which, I am sorry to

say, only 25 have been spent in the service of the Lord. My wife has almost completed the fifty-ninth year of her life. Throughout all her suffering, she has seen only the One, the faithful One, who has also led her so far. O the depth of the love of our God!"

There are the times of our lives
Portrayed in brief lines.
God has given us life
and heretofore provided us with grace.
And we now dedicate this life
To the service of the Lord on earth.

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's name
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name.
O that each pulse were thanks
And every breath a song.

When will the people from the Terek be able to sing like that?

E. Settlements by Molotschna Mennonites on Purchased Land §402

1) Brasol: Own Volost Krasnopol (Schoenfeld) in the District of Alexandrovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav; Post Office Gulyapol; a number of small villages and estates. These settlements on the lands of estate owners originated at various times in their several areas since 1868 (some places still earlier). Schoenfeld—volost administration, church building; Blumenheim—church building; Rosenhof—church building; Blumenfeld—church building. Land—70,000 dessiatines; population, about 2000; families—about 400.

2) Crimea. As early as about 1860, even before the above-mentioned settlement on crown lands, the Crimea was the object of land-seekers from the Mennonite Molotschna; some leased land on shares, some bought quite cheaply. At present (1910) probably more than 700 Mennonite families live in the Crimea. The largest estate known to us owned by a Mennonite in the Crimea consists of over 7000 dessiatines. The villages are for the most part very small. (For names see below under "Church Statistics.") The total ownership of land of the Mennonites in the Crimea (without leased land) comprises about 40,000 dessiatines.

3) Caucasia. Besides those who lived on the crown land settlements Velikokniashesk and Olgino and the former land lease colony Suvorovka, Mennonite land buyers, as well as renters, moved into anterior Caucasia already in the year 1863. Among the first were the families Nikolai

Schmidt, Steinbach, and Isaak Matthies, Rudnerweide. A group of Mennonite landed estate owners is located at the railroad station Prochladnaia and at other places in the Kuban area and in the Province of Stavropol. For statistical computation this land appears in various Mennonite volosts where owners are registered.

4) In the eastern provinces, Orenburg, Samara, and Ufa, the private ownership of land by the Molotschna Mennonites runs into tens of thousands of dessiatines, which also are registered in the respective volosts.

5) Molotschna settlers own significant areas of land in the Don District, in the Province of Kharkov and Voronezh (cf. *#406*, note 2, and *#408*).

6) South-western Siberia. The same can be said of the Mennonite private ownership of land in South-western Siberia, in the provinces or districts of Tobolsk, Tomsk, Akmolinsk, etc. Not everything has as yet been cleared up with regard to statistics.

§403 F. Settlements of Molotschna Mennonites on Rented Land in Siberia (See above, "Sagradovka")

Approximately 1000 families from the two Molotschna districts have gone to the provinces or districts of Tobolsk, Tomsk, Semipalatinsk, etc. The groups of the Mennonites in Siberia will receive special treatment in the church statistics.

§404 G. Settlements of Mennonites in Russia which were never associated with the Chortitza and Molotschna Districts.

A. In Poland (Provinces of Warsaw and Poltzk) and Volhynia

These oldest Mennonite settlements of Mennonites in present Russia from the time of the Polish kings have become very small through emigration to Southern Russia and America. The total population is about 500. (See church statistics and "Assessment Districts" for forestry matters.)

B. In Kurland

Through the forestry service a number of Mennonites have become known in Kurland in recent years. Perhaps these Mennonites belong to the Mennonite Church in East Prussia (District of Gumbinnen, Prussian Lithuania; see *#13*) and came into Russian citizenship as a result of boundary adjustments between Prussia and Russia, 1807-1815 (see *#408*).



a) Mennonite home in Russian Turkestan.



b) A scene from south-west Siberia (Mennonite, Kirghiz and Cossack). From a water color by Secondary teacher J. H. Janzen, Ohrloff.

§405 C. The Older Settlements in the Province of Samara.

1) Volost Malyshinskaia (formerly Koeppental). District of Novousensk, Post Office Koeppental. This settlement came about through the immigration, since 1853, of Mennonites directly from Prussia. Ten villages—Koeppental—volost administration, church; Ohrloff—church; land—14,000 dessiatines (former crown land and [?] land of estate owners); original farm norm—65 dessiatines; population about 1500 (those who belong to the volost).

2) Alt-Samara. Alexandertal Volost, District of Samara, Post Office Koshki. This settlement also came about through the immigration of Mennonites directly from Prussia in 1861. Land—about 14,000 dessiatines (originally crown land and land estate owners); original farm norm—65 dessiatines; population—about 1000 (those who belong to the volost).

3) From these two volosts an "exodus" (*#258*) took place to Turkestan, District of Aulie-Ata, Post Office Aulie-Ata (with participation of people from the Molotschna), where more than 1000 people live in 5 villages; Romanovka—church building of the Mennonite Church; Nikolaipol—church building of the M.B. Church.

§406 D. Land Ownership of the Russian Mennonites in Summary Form

The most important settlements (volosts or groups of villages):

1) The Old Colony, Chortitza District with Schoenwiese and Kronsgarten owns former crown land (including leased land) 32,988 dessiatines and land purchased by the villages—4,850 dessiatines. Total—37,838 dessiatines.

2) The Chortitza daughter settlements on volost lands own 65,403 dessiatines acquired by the mother volost; some villages have made private purchases of 941 dessiatines. Total—66,344 dessiatines.

3) The Chortitza daughter settlements on self-bought private land own 31,856 dessiatines.

4) The two Molotschna Volosts Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld together own (including leased land) 120,000 dessiatines.

5) The Molotschna daughter settlements on volost lands own 90,000 dessiatines.

6) The Schoenfeld Volost (Brasol) owns private lands—70,000 dessiatines.

7) In the Crimea the land of individual villages, landed estates and large farms totals 40,000 dessiatines.

8) The Volosts Malyshinskaia (Koeppental) and Alexandertal (Alt-Samara) own 28,000 dessiatines.

In a number of individual small settlements—volosts, villages, landed estates and large farms—there are in ownership by the settlers from the various Mennonite mother-districts more than 300,000 dessiatines.

Notation 1. Already for the year 1907 the Mennonite plenipotentiary for forestry camp matters had ascertained that there were 713,213 dessiatines of land possessed by Mennonites. But it was only in the same year that the stream of settlers began to move to Siberia; besides, there were continual purchases of land by single persons or groups (for example, Central, Sadovaia ["Anna"], Arkadak, etc.). As the most conservative estimate of the number of dessiatines for the present (December 1910) we may assume 800,000. In addition there are a minimum of 50,000 dessiatines of leased land. We can well say that the land area is moving from 800,000 to one million dessiatines and will in not too long a time constitute one million for a population of between 80,000 and 100,000. According to Mennonite statistics, which are quite incomplete (entire parishes and groups of settlers are omitted), but therefore also cautious by quoting the lowest figures, there are barely 80,000.[6] According to data and conditions of the general military statistics there should be over 100,000 souls. Thus on the average this would mean 10 dessiatines per person or 50 dessiatines per family.

Notation 2. The center of gravity of the Mennonite ownership of land is in the provinces of Ekaterinoslav and Taurida; they are followed by South West Siberia, the provinces of Kherson, Kharkov, Orenburg, Samara, Ufa, Northern Caucasia, the Don region, the Provinces of Saratov, Voronezh, etc.

Notation 3. In the year 1908 there were 124 officially reported landed estate owners registered in the Halbstadt Volost with a land area of 140,338 dessiatines; for the Chortitza Volost—74 landed estate owners with 45,264 dessiatines. (For the volosts of Chortitza and Nikolaipol-Jasykov together, 68,279 dessiatines in 1909; the number of landed estate owners is not given.) For the Gnadenfeld Volost in 1908—75 landed estate owners with 26,537 dessiatines. The largest known landed estate, held by a Mennonite in Russia, has over 18,000 dessiatines.

XLII.
TRADE AND INDUSTRY—PROPERTIES

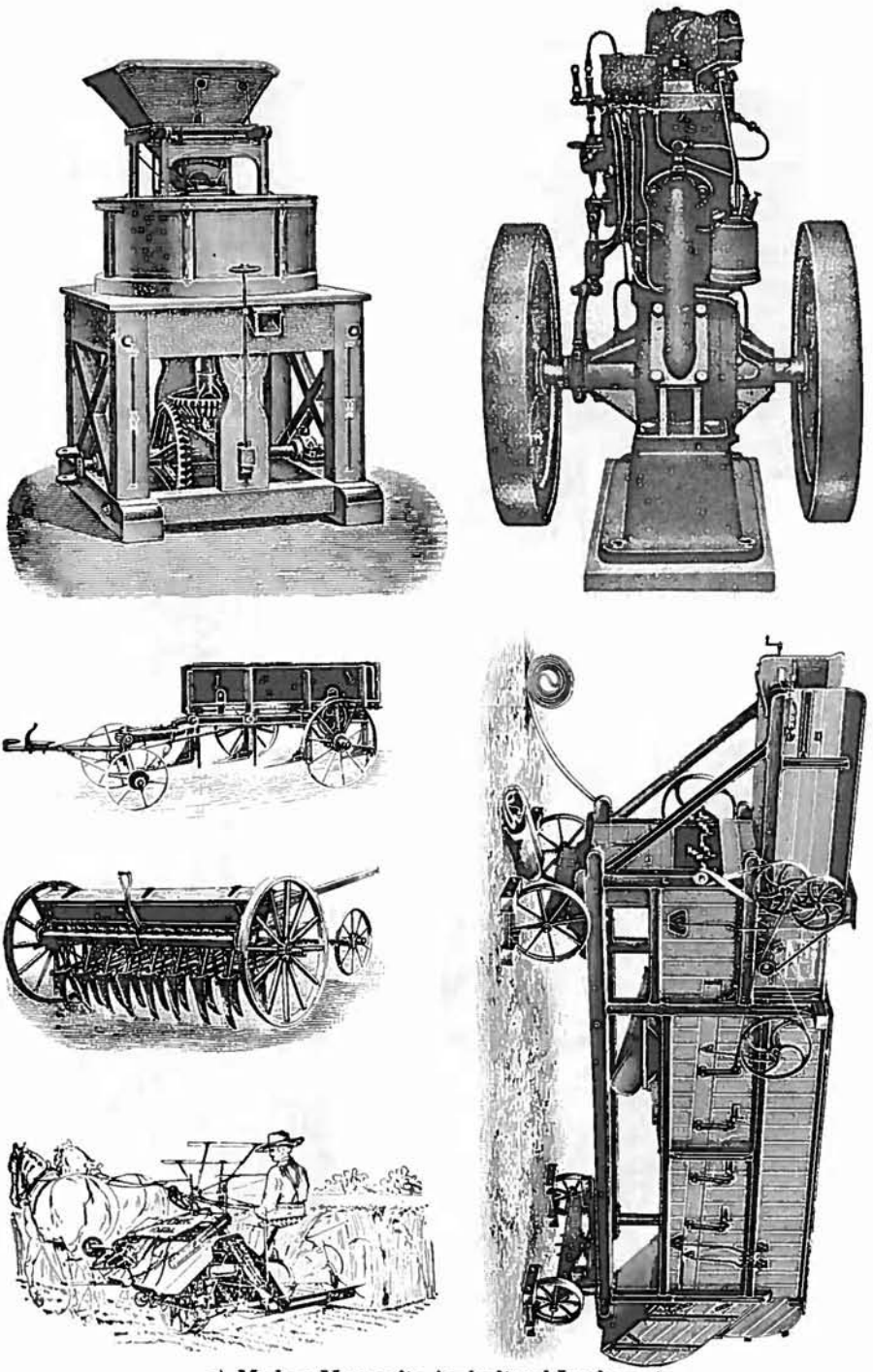
§407

1. Number, Type, and Value of the Trade and Industry Establishments

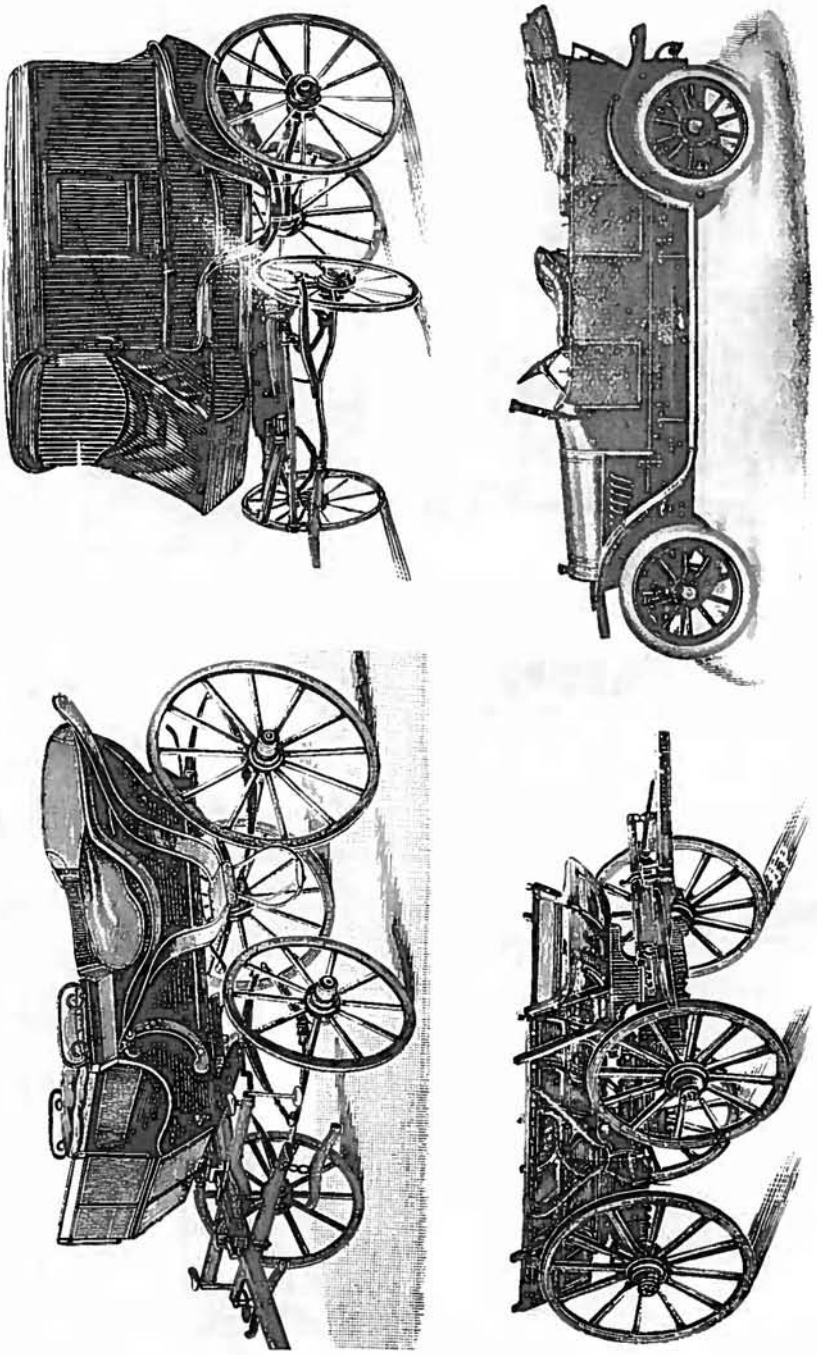
In 1908, for the purpose of levies and support of the Mennonite forestry camps, 576 Mennonite trade firms and industrial plants with a "declared" value of 5,595,878 rubles were recorded. These were distributed as follows:

a) Chortitza Volost and its registered owners: 131 establishments with the "declared" value of 1,525,078 rubles. Of these: 30 windmills valued at 42,700 rubles, each from 700-2200 rubles; 30 motor and steam flour mills valued at 833,600 rubles, each from 3000 to 100,000 rubles; 16 larger workshops and factories for the manufacturing of agricultural tools and machinery and wagons valued at 378,190 rubles, each from 1000 to 125,879 rubles; 9 brickworks valued at 6400 rubles, each from 300 to 1500 rubles; 14 smaller businesses (handicrafts) valued at 26,800 rubles, each from 100 to 6000 rubles; 24 trade firms valued at 108,900 rubles, each from 500 to 22,000 rubles; 1 book-shop valued at 7000 (?)[7] rubles. N.B. Characteristically, no tailer shop, no cobbler shop reported! As rare industries (included in "smaller machinery plants") there are 1 clock-making shop, 6000 rubles; 1 vinegar brewing plant valued at 40,000 (?) rubles; only 2 lodgings or inns (included under "trade firms"); no treadmills.

b) Halbstadt Volost: 191 establishments to the value of 1,272,415 rubles. Of these: 37 windmills valued at 62,075 rubles, of these 26 are ordinary windmills—200 to 1200 rubles each, and 11 so-called "Hollaender"—1200 to 8000 rubles each; 27 motor and steam flour mills valued at 309,500 rubles, each 500 to 60,000 rubles; 7 larger workshops and factories for the manufacturing of agricultural tools and machines and wagons valued at 186,500 rubles, each 2000 to 90,000 rubles; 18 brick works and roof-tile works valued at 84,000 rubles, each from 1000 to 15,000 rubles; 38 smaller machinery plants valued at 21,700 rubles, each from 100 to 1500 rubles; of these 1 tailor shop, value—200 rubles; 41 trade firms valued at 205,350 rubles each from 90 to 50,000 rubles; book and music shops valued at 500 (music shop), 3000, and 6000 (?) rubles. N.B. Characteristically, there are rare industries: 2 print shops valued at 3000 rubles and 20,000 rubles; 1 winery (distillery?) valued at 40,000 rubles; 1 beer and vinegar brewery—50,000 rubles; 1 Vinegar brewery—9500 rubles; 1 starch factory—5000 rubles; 5 dye-houses—200 to 1500 rubles, included in smaller industries; 1 stone-masonry—1000 rubles; 1 sausage factory—1200 rubles; 1 photographic studio—500 rubles; 1 cheese factory—500 rubles; 1 soap-works—300 rubles; 2



a) Modern Mennonite Agricultural Implements.



b) Modern Mennonite Vehicles.

inns—1650 and 6700 rubles, included in "trade firms"; 3 brass foundries or "brass lock-works" valued at 800 rubles, included under "smaller industries"; 1 tailor shop—200 rubles, included in "smaller industries"; and 2 cobbler shops, included in "smaller industries"; no other tailor or cobbler shops indicated among 576 establishments by Mennonites. (Naturally some do exist, as we know; apparently they operate without hired help and are not taxed?)

c) Gnadenfeld Volost: 100 establishments to the value of 493,750 rubles. Of these: 38 windmills (two "Hollaender") valued at 38,650 rubles, each from 300 to 3000 rubles; 16 motor and steam flour mills, value —231,500 rubles, each from 200 to 50,000 rubles; 3 larger work-shops and factories for the manufacturing of agricultural tools and machines and wagons, value—55,000 rubles, each from 1200 to 50,000 rubles; 27 trading firms, value—97,200 rubles, each from 500 to 15,000 rubles; 2 book-shops, value—1500 and 1500 rubles. N.B. Characteristically, there is 1 nursery [horticultural], value—1000 rubles. In the Halbstadt Volost we know several important nurseries: Felsental, Rueckenau, Altonau, etc., and none is reported?! In all of the Gnadenfeld Volost no smaller industries are reported except blacksmith shops.

d) The remaining 145 industries and trading firms to a value of 2,203,275 rubles are divided among the remaining Mennonite groups. Of these the largest with given sums follow: Nikolaipol Volost (Jasykovo): 23 establishments, value—256,700 rubles; Ohrloff Volost (Sagradovka): 63 establishments, value—146,300 rubles; Velikokniashesk Volost (Kuban): 17 establishments, value—127,500 rubles; Neu-Samara (Molotschna settlement): 9 establishments, value—56,300 rubles; Alexandertal Volost (Alt-Samara): 8 establishments, value—44,000 rubles; Malyshinskaia Volost (Koeppental): 21 establishments, value—42,920 rubles; etc. The nature is the same throughout. N.B. In the Kuban three watermills, 1000, 4000, and 4000 rubles; 1 dairy, 6000 rubles. Several flourishing nurseries are not included in the statistics of the president of the forestry camps.

2. The Property Conditions of the Various Mennonite Groups in Comparison with Each Other §408

According to the assessment districts, the value of the property in 1908 and 1909 was 194 and 246 million rubles respectively. This constitutes the basis for the 1908 and 1909 taxation for the support of the forestry camps for 1909 and 1910, and was distributed as follows. (At the same time we shall state the number of the taxable Mennonite persons of both sexes between the ages of 14 and 60 years; the sum total of the property and the persons for 1909 we shall place in parentheses after the sum total for 1908.) 1) Halbstadt—27,900,000 rubles, 4328 persons (27,638,403

rubles, 4754 persons); 2) Gnadenfeld—23,700,000 rubles, 4237 persons (20,234,850 rubles, 4150 persons); 3) Chortitza—19,961,387 rubles, 5075 persons (29,255,673 rubles, 5349 persons); 4) Krasnopol (Schoenfeld, "Brasol")—18,713,148 rubles, 948 persons (24,399,325 rubles, 1040 persons); 5) Melitopol (City: industrial establishments; District: land held is far more valuable)—15,454,520 rubles, 314 persons (20,480,306 rubles, 395 persons); 6) Crimea—12,588,207 rubles, 1972 persons (19,041,763 rubles, 2165 persons); 7) Nikolaipol (Jasykovo)—12,392,310 rubles, 1050 persons (14,719,631 rubles, 1042 persons); 8) Landed estate owners in the district of Berdiansk—9,193,844 rubles, 105 persons (15,713,227 rubles, 187 persons); 9) Kharkov (landed estate owners and industrialists in the Province of Kharkov, mainly in the District of Isium)—8,258,398 rubles, 1383 persons (10,325,204 rubles, 1386 persons); 10) Schoenwiese—7,961,586 rubles, 548 persons (9,439,847 rubles, 707 persons); 11) Memrik (Molotschna settlement, District of Bachmut)—6,445,227 rubles, 1481 persons (9,141,192 rubles, 1528 persons); 12) Ohrloff (Sagradovka)—5,077,156 rubles, 2232 persons (6,489,196 rubles, 1863 persons); 13) Neu-Chortitza (Baratov, Chortitza settlement, District of Verchnedneprovsk)—4,907,809 rubles, 1606 persons (6,463,870 rubles, 1400 persons); 14) New-York (Ignatievo)—4,474,213 rubles, 1369 persons (6,310,424 rubles, 1423 persons); 15) Nikolaital (Borsenko, Chortitza settlement, District of Ekaterinoslav)—3,542,474 rubles, 468 persons (4,589,127 rubles, 463 persons); 16) Malyschino (Koeppental)—2,249,559 rubles, 847 persons (2,695,511 rubles, 742 persons); 17) Alexandertal (Alt-Samara)—2,224,925 rubles, 466 persons (3,283,290 rubles, 474 persons); 18) Neu-Samara (Molotschna settlement, District of Samara)—1,957,031 rubles, 1503 persons (4,310,048 rubles, 1520 persons); 19) Ufa (Molotschna landed estate owners in the Province of Ufa, mainly in the District of Belebei)—1,840,000 rubles, 643 persons (2,585,300 rubles, 618 persons); 20) Caucasia (Velikokniashesk Volost, Kuban region and Olgino, Province of Stavropol, with the landed estate owners in the immediate vicinity)—1,508,716 rubles,[8] 880 persons (2,397,751 rubles, 898 persons); 21) Omsk (Southwestern Siberia)—1,297,062 rubles, 1212 persons (3,348,089 rubles, 1240 persons); 22) Orenburg (Chortitza and Molotschna settlements, District of Orenburg)—738,549 rubles, 2308 persons (1,655,603 rubles, 2263 persons); 23) City of Berdiansk (i.e., the Mennonites in it)—725,425 rubles, 85 persons (1,095,970 rubles, 103 persons); 24) Polish Mennonites—427,500 rubles, 302 persons (230,500 rubles, 262 persons); 25) Terek (Molotschna settlement and estate owners, District of Chassav-Iurt(—368,319 rubles, 867 persons (306,328 rubles, 1050 persons); 26) Mennonites in Volhynia 17,423 rubles, 7 persons (25,717 rubles, 7 persons); 27) Mennonites in Kurland—(?) rubles, (?) persons (15,000 rubles, 38 persons); 28) Pavlodar (South-West Siberia 2.) for 1910—(16,610 rubles, 1087 persons).

Note. The amount of taxable property of 194 million for 1908 had risen to 246 million (exactly 246,207,760 rubles) in 1909. In part this occurred through the natural increase in value and the additional purchase of land; but surely also through new statements of evaluation which come closer to the facts. Clearly, we are learning in a laudable, God-pleasing way! What, for example, do the statements of "the property of the proprietors of trade and industry" of 5½ million in 1907 mean? Never has one acted literally more exactly according to the word of the apostle (Rom. 12:16b) than in these statements of value; but certainly also never more blatantly contrary to the mind of the apostle. Also in the management of the economic affairs of the forestry service the Russian Mennonite society has made progress for the better: according to the statement of accounts by the authorized agent for 1910, 73,000 rubles of the debt have been paid and all expenses have been met, 25,000 rubles remained in the treasury, and in 1909 the bad arrears dropped from 40,900 rubles down to 33,500 rubles in 1909. For the year 1911 the repayment of the last aggregate liabilities (somewhat over 100,000 rubles) has been provided for in the estimated budget (see *#285*).

3. The Position of the Mennonites in the Society of Russia in the Area of Agriculture, Trade and Commerce,[9] as well as Local Autonomy. §409

A. Report of two Mennonite Farmers

1) In matters of agriculture the Mennonites lead all other agricultural districts. This can best be seen in the Molotschna where the Mennonites harvest considerably more per dessiatine than do the other colonists who immigrated at the same time. (Still true today?) The reason probably lies in the fact that the forefathers of the Mennonites stemmed mainly from agricultural regions and emigrated from Prussia at a time when advanced agricultural methods were already being used (even if, naturally, not to the same degree as now). Among the Mennonites themselves it was evident for many years who originally had been farmers and who had not. Some villages in which a predominant part of the settlers had been tradesmen (weavers, etc.) lagged behind the others for a long time.

It is self-evident that many blunders were made in a land with entirely different climatic and different soil conditions. However, every mistake was soon recognized as such, and it is this which distinguished the Mennonites from many other agricultural groups who practiced mismanagement and made mistakes for decades before they recognized them.

Summer fallow, as well as fertilized fallow, was first found among the Mennonites, although not nearly in all the colonies at the same time.

It is the summer fallow which saves the farmer from ruin. Now the noblemen and other German colonists realize this, even the Russian small farmer. The realization of the value of fertilizing the summer fallow came much slower; yet the understanding that fallow and fertilizer are the means for large yields from the soil triumphed. The present government is trying to spread this insight by all the means at its disposal, such as agronomists, schools, experimental farms, pamphlets, newspapers, etc. In the past the Mennonites have been the good example in farming as well as in animal husbandry and horticulture. But they have probably not maintained this leading role to the same degree as in the past. There is too little understanding for an educated farmer. Is it not strange that the Mennonites are the ones who have no trained agronomists, as well as no trained fruit and vegetable growers? Vegetable growers are not found at all. With few exceptions the old methods are used and little is done to improve oneself. In many other matters there is a mania for education, but not in this. (For several years, however, the "Molotschna Division of the Imperial Russian Fruit Growing Association" has been working successfully. The main initiator is P. P. Wiebe, the president of the association.) Only with the help of trained agronomists in our midst can we also in the future be useful to our Russian homeland as model farmers, which is our duty. In addition, the best literature on agriculture, that of Germany, is at our disposal. With regard to horticulture our forestry camps could temporarily serve us if our young men were given more theoretical as well as practical instruction there.

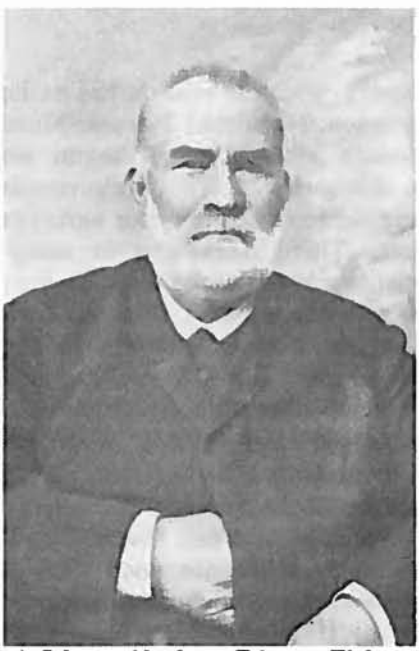
§410 2) In the field of trades and industry the Mennonites have been in the lead since the beginning of their settling in Russia. Trades were well known to them and well represented among them: smiths, joiners, wheel wrights, clockmakers and persons who clean and repair clocks, tailors, cobblers, saddlers, even weavers, cloth workers, and experienced millers. From far and near, in the vicinity from other colonists, as well as from the Russian population people came to the Mennonites in order to learn a trade. The work was thorough, so that I (one of the reporters) still own a wagon which is approximately 40 years old, has been used much, and has carried heavy loads. There are clocks which have served for 75 or more years and still run well and accurately. Famous locksmiths were Fast in Tiege, Staess in Neu-Halbstadt; smiths were Wiebe in Tiege, Berg in Halbstadt, Abram Peters in Ladekopp. A well-known cloth maker was Toews in Fabrikerwiese, who, with the chief Area Administrator, Klassen (Rosenort), founded the cloth factory in Halbstadt. My father wore a coat made of cloth from this factory for about 20 years, and afterwards it served a miller for a further 3 years as an everyday coat. More important than cloth-making, and continuing longer than it, was



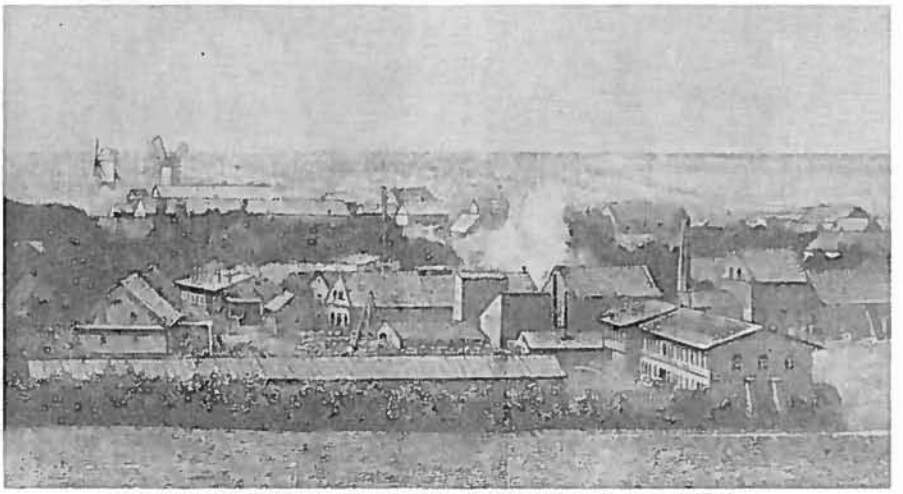
a) Peter Lepp, Chortitza.



b) Steam Mill Owner, Jakob Niebuhr.



c) Johann Abraham Friesen, Einlage, died in Rueckenau.



d) The Lepp & Wallmann Factory in Chortitza, founded 1850.

the cloth-dyeing industry, which is also on the decline today. Important cloth dyers were Thomsen, Neukirch; Penner, Muensterberg; Thiessen, Schoenau. A large-scale silk industry begun about 1860 in Neu-Halbstadt was soon discontinued. The entrepreneurs were not Mennonites. Later, the Franz-Schroeder factory for agricultural implements was begun in the buildings. There are among us many pieces of furniture from the 30s and 40s, such as cupboards, chests of drawers, chests, bedsteads, which give the impression that they were made only a few years ago. One of the best cabinet makers was the so-called "Tischler Fast" in Tiege, from whom Philipp Isaak, besides others, learned the trade. He directed a large cabinet shop for many years. Another great master was Stobbe in Neu-Halbstadt. Carpentry also flourished, especially after the hearths had to be built strictly according to the Cornies method. Because wheat-growing flourished so enormously after the Crimean War, especially between the 60s and 80s, and the floor prices were so low, and settlements such as Nikolaipol (Jasykovo), Sagradovka, and others were established, most of the Mennonite masters were in time replaced by tradesmen from other countries, especially by German foreigners: joiner Hoge, shoemaker Hoge, locksmith Schritt,

wheelwright Freiman (Halbstadt), cooper Fiek and many others in the Molotschna and Chortitza districts, and by Jews, especially tailors and cobblers. Important Mennonite master tailors in the 50s to 70s were Peter Franz in Alexandertal and Bernhard Fast in Halbstadt and later his protege, J. Klassen. Still another development of trades took place: some of the master tradesmen worked themselves up to become manufacturers of agricultural tools and machinery, especially those who had more or less practical technical knowledge and natural talent for mechanics. After former clock makers, locksmiths, then cabinet makers and wheelwrights, the following take first place among them: in the Molotschna, for example, Kornelius Wedel, Neu-Halbstadt, who founded the first iron-foundry in the Molotschna; and the brothers Klassen, Neu-Halbstadt, now in Melitopol. To a much larger degree than in the Molotschna, trades developed into gigantic largescale industry in the Chortitza District. First initiators and pioneers were Lepp and Hildebrand in Chortitza, both wall-clock makers; Koop, a smith; Johann Friesen (Einlage), carpenter and builder of windmills. A great advantage for the manufacturers of machinery in their experimental stage were the excessively high prices of foreign machinery due to high tariffs and, as no law prevented it, the freedom to copy any desirable part of these machines. The Mennonite manufacturers of machinery learned gradually to produce types of machines which fully suited the domestic cultivation and the local soil. They improved them steadily as the need arose—and they proved themselves competent—to the degree in which the farmer made greater demands and learned to value and use the higher technical skill of the foreign countries. The several mentioned and many unmentioned manufacturers of agricultural implements and machinery produce plows, drills, reapers, rakes, wagons, threshing machines powered by horses and steam, fanning mills, etc.; even steam mill installations and steam engines. (The approximate number of such factories is indicated in the statistics below, *#407.*) The products of these factories go out into all parts of Russia, except to the West and Baltic provinces, even into distant Siberia and Turkestan.[10]

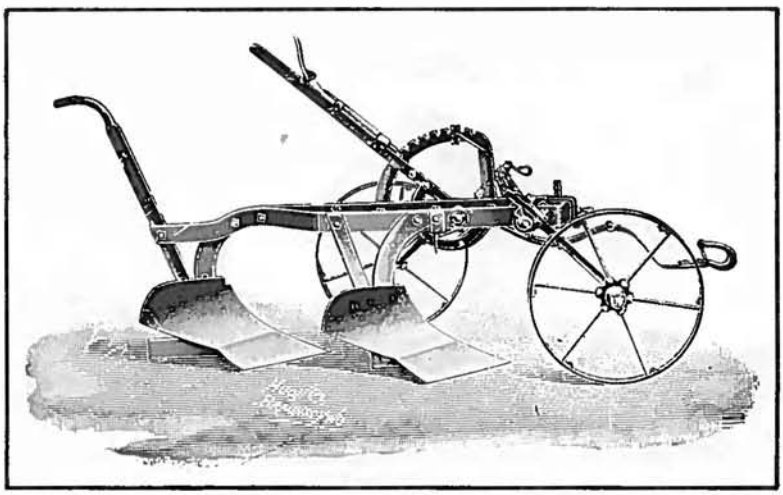
Some of the Mennonite immigrants who knew the miller's trade founded mills: water mills (Felsental, Petershagen, Halbstadt, Chortitza, etc.) which, however, could not continue in the long run because of water scarcity; windmills and treadmills; also oil presses. These mills were erected and operated predominantly in the Mennonite colonies, but also in large Russian villages, country towns, and cities. The windmills fare better than the treadmills in competition with the steam flour mills. A famous mill builder for many years was Bock in Schoenwiese; his rival in the Molotschna was Martin Friesen in Sparrau, who also built many mills for Russian peasants and noblemen. He also built the wooden

threshing machine of that time driven by a horse-gin. If in the long run the windmills are to win the battle against the steam mills, it must come about through engineering improvement according to the standards set in Holland, the home of the windmills. It would be strange if the free energy of the wind were to give way to the costly energy of coal, this could be explained only by the rigid unadaptability of our industry on the one hand and a feverish uncritical mania for innovation on the other. Both errors are simultaneously characteristic of our people in a conspicuous way and give evidence of the same lack of proper rational cultural development as has been established in the matter of the growing of grain, fruit and vegetables. These are not culturally proper and healthy economic developments of the society as a whole, but they are innovative, materialistically speculative "culture leaps" of single persons and groups in a few economic areas, leaps which often cause broken legs while the whole remains stationary or slowly and without understanding trails behind. The consequences are seen, for example, in the Mennonite Terek and the continuing need of thousands of settler families who have to be helped in their poverty winter after winter but who still have not been helped out of their poverty. What we regard as a disadvantage is not the expansion of agriculture and industry, but rather the neglecting of small-scale business, the root, in favor of large-scale business, the crown of the tree, and the lack of ideas, scientific knowledge and methods in general. As far as the windmills are concerned, the future, in spite of the steam mills, will not be secure for the smaller wooden types, but for the larger so-called "Hollaender" with round bodies of masonry.

The owners of steam mills among the Mennonites have acquired great wealth; this can be said of the owners of factories only to a limited degree. Many flourished for a short time and then declined.[11] The most important steam mills owned by Mennonites are located in Ekaterinoslav, Chortitza, Alexandrovsk (Thiessen, Heese, Toews, Penner, Fast, Niebuhr, Unger, and others. J. J. Thiessen is the chairman of the South-Russia Division of the Pan-Russian Union of Millers) and in Halbstadt (Willms). (This was written about seven years ago. Now large mills are situated in Nikopol, Kharkov, the Don region, Southwest Siberia.) In the case of many of these mills the owners are also the originators of their plans, and in some all of the machinery and the whole structure are entirely of Mennonite workmanship. Naturally these are not nervous speculators without ideas or methods, but predestined, divinely ordained social agents of cultural and technical progress, feelers, as it were, of the entire body, groping and testing, seeking new fertile soil, new spheres of activity and new possibilities for the whole, which can no longer exist in its present condition. Agriculture cannot exist without new methods,



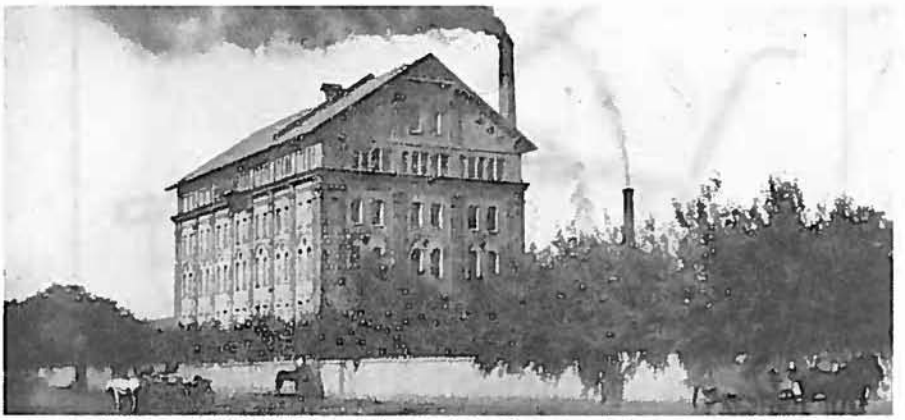
a) Windmill



b) Two-shared Plow



c) First "Dutch" Mill, Blumenort, Molotschna.



d) Steam Mill in Halbstadt (part of the first starch factory complex).

new methods not without large areas of experimentation, these not without large possessions and capital—for the initial periods, for "this world,"—the large possessions with large production not without markets: the large mill is an important market place. Thus expansion is necessary; but woe when expansion is not confronted in an adequate measure by the power tension at the center, by the inner strength and the inner content! That causes the speculative cultural "leaps" and the "broken legs" of the public body.

If with our approximately 16,000 families, we had 12,000 prosperous small farmers, fruit and vegetable growers on 25,[12] 23, 5, 2, and 1 dessiatines, 4000 owners of full farms, and 200 larger and large landed estate owners—as culturally interested leaders of experimental farms, private experimental stations, etc.—and corresponding flourishing small family trades, larger and large "work-shops"—mills, factories, and large mills, *then* we would be the collective model proprietor whom Catherine II believed to have called into the land, whom Tsar Alexander II thought to have in the land, and into whom Johann Cornies wanted to make us. His monument of marble in the Ohrloff cemetery is a pillar with its capital blasted off. That is how he wanted it, according to popular legend, as an indication that his work was not completed. Are we as Russian Mennonites a pillar with its capital blasted off? Did Cornies in spirit see us at the turn of the century with our "Terek?" When will the collective Cornies come, the group of men for our times and conditions, equal to him in ideas, faithfulness, and strength, who will place the capital on his pillar?

A Mennonite large industry undertaking that bears special mention is the former starch factory in Halbstadt. Begun with really ingenius power of expansion, it failed because of a lack of inner strength. This business is the largest founded by Mennonites among Mennonites. Its products were excellent, the market large; and yet the splendid enterprise of clever, courageous, and rich people came to deplorable ruin. There was a lack of technical and financial, as well as of commercial-theoretical, knowledge and gradually acquired and developed practical methods uniquely suited to its own needs.

In conclusion we want to say that the stopping of cloth manufacturing, among others, was a physical necessity. The almost complete cessation of sheep-raising and cheap labor (in the beginning serfs were hired from their masters through the mediation of the administrative authority for long terms at extremely low wages, really at "cost price," essentially purchase money), as well as the fact that the economy was entirely directed towards agriculture, could only bring about the demise of such enterprises; and these had to make room for

the machinery and mill industry. The manufacturing of starch also deserves a place. And it seems that this industry is struggling upwards, slowly, cautiously and persistently at another place, Muntau.

We have reported on printing shops under "Publications."

§411 3) Commerce in the Mennonite colonies for domestic needs has been managed from the beginning by competent men, some of whom have received a commercial training in Prussia which was well adequate for that time. These men brought the produce of the colonies onto the market in the widest sense of the word. Butter was taken to Sevastopol, Eupatoria, Kertsch, Taganrog, etc. (In his younger years Johann Cornies was such a man who created markets.) Wool was taken to Romny, then to Poltava and Kharkov, likewise silk. From the named cities the Mennonite merchants brought the goods used locally: manufactured goods, groceries, etc. These merchants bought up the wheat and exported it even to foreign countries. Some of these merchants were in the Molotschna: Johann Wiens, Altonau, and his successor Aron Regehr; Johann Wiens, son of Johann Wiens, above, Alexandertal; Heinrich Peters and his son-in-law Johann Enns, Gnadenheim; Michael Janzen, Schoensee; his brother Heinrich Janzen and his successor Heinrich Ediger, Grossweide; Peter Dyck, Pordenau, and his sons Abram and Johann Dyck, the latter in Mariawohl; Nikolai Harder, Gnadenfeld; Abraham Wiebe, Abram Matthies, and Isaak Matthies, Rudnerweide; Johann Claasen and Cornelius Reimer, Liebenau; Heinrich Reimer, father and son, Ohrloff; Gerhard Klassen, Blumenort; Franz Klassen, Lichtfelde; Abram Wiebe, Lichtenau; Neufeld, Lindenau; Guenther and his successor Franz Martens, Rueckenau; Heinrich Willms, Halbstadt; Gerhard Wiens who died in Memrik and his son Johann Wiens, Neu-Halbstadt; Jakob Esau, Neu-Halbstadt; etc. Grain trade was carried on especially by a group of Mennonites in Berdiansk: Jakob Sudermann, Isaak and Gerhard Dyck, Dietrich Guenther, Nikolai Wiens, etc. Old Colonists: Franz Dyck, Gerhard Braun, Heinrich Funk, Rempel (Einlage) and others. The Heinrichs family in Einlage carried on a huge trade in wood. The "Molotschna milk cow," under which name it went as far as Constantinople, became a great market item after the Crimean War. Similarly Mennonite wagons, then plows, and finally all possible agricultural implements, machinery and flour. But all these men, who gained extensive recognition in the colonies because of their accomplishments in commerce, were not merchants who could have been of real importance to the commerce of Russia. Even the commerce in the colonies appears to regress at present, especially as it concerns Mennonite merchants. As a rule the Mennonite merchant also becomes a land owner as soon as possible, and the Russians and Jews make their



a) Small Farm with Smithy, Molotschna.



b) Franz & Schroeder Factory in Neu-Halbstadt (formerly the silk processing factory).



c) "New" Starch Factory in Muntau, Molotschna.

appearance more and more. People also make their purchases directly in the neighboring cities, and, owing to the increasing ease of travel, drive even to Kharkov and Odessa. Then an important reason may be that the Mennonite questions the ethical standpoint of the merchant. In former times a merchant who was elected as preacher had either to decline the position or to relinquish his business. Apparently, no one was able to establish a prosperous business on a purely Christian and at the same time on a rational basis of commercial expertise. Will the Halbstadt Business School give us a true and ethically-sound merchant class? Mennonite commerce exists almost only in the form of marketing its own produce. (According to J.J. and C.R.)

The book trade is treated under "Publications."

Note. Doubtless our society lacks trade schools. Besides the Halbstadt Business School about half a dozen lower technical or else trade schools properly distributed by region, and a competent intermediate technical institution, are a necessity for industry; likewise, an intermediate agricultural school is needed. If in addition an advanced secondary school were added and the *pia desideria* with regard to pedagogical preliminary instruction were to become a reality, then the

Russian Mennonite community would be well provided with schools. (The question of theological education belongs in another chapter.)

B. Appraisals by Strangers §412

1) To the more critical statements about the cultural state and importance of the Mennonites in Russia from the Mennonite point of view we add a favorable appraisal by an important non-Mennonite concerning the relationship of the Mennonites to the Russian peasant and their economic influence upon him. P. W. Kamensky, who has been mentioned above, *#260* and further, writes in 1895: "In recent times, after the abolition of the measures which established a special status of the colonists, there arose in the districts of new settlements of the former colonists mixed volosts, formed of Russian peasants and settlers [special designation of the former colonists]. No nationalistic parties exist in such volosts. The Russian peasants, even where they form the overwhelming majority, vote persons into the village and volost offices from their own midst as well as from among the settlers. I have seen that the volost court consisted of a Mennonite as chairman and two Russians as judges in the G. Volost, Bachmut District, Province of Ekaterinoslav. The entire judicial personnel had been voted in by the Russian peasants. The chairman had been voted in for a second triennium [at the time of the report by Mr. Kamensky]. Such examples could be cited in impressive numbers. Thus, for example [we quote for our purposes only Mennonite names; Mr. Kamensky also quotes names of non-Mennonite colonists] in the year 1892 Jakob Loewen held the office of chairman of the volost-court in the Leschkarev Volost, Ekaterinoslav District [before him Martin Thielmann and others held the office for many years in the same volost]. In the Vesselotiernov Volost court, Verchnedneprovsk District, the following settlers [Mennonites] have served as volost judges: Peter Dyck, nine years; Wilhelm Niessen, six years; Abram Krause, three years; Abram Neufeld, three years; J. Block, nine years. David Braun who served six years as judge and has now (1895) been elected as chairman. . . ." [We know of several similar cases: thus a certain Braun of Tshockmack Volost Alexandrovskaia, Crimea, served a number of years as volost chairman; Cornelius J. Reimer, Wiesenfeld, Pavlograd District, has done similar services for many years; we know specifically that M. Thielmann, C. Reimer, and Braun often were called upon by the peasantry and the administrative authorities of their districts to settle especially difficult issues in community affairs, particularly also in money matters.][13] Mr. Kamensky reports further in the above-mentioned place: ". . . that many Russian villages which have been in a more or less continuous relationship with the colonists and landed estate owners surpass in their prosperity villages that do not enjoy such a relationship."

§413 2) Another appraisal from former times. The Roman Catholic priest, Father Conrad Keller, writes in his book, *Die deutschen Kolonien in Suedrussland* (The German Colonies in Southern Russia) published by Stadelmeier, Odessa, 1905, page 71: "On September 6, 1841, the Minister for Crown Lands, Count Kisselev, was in the colony Grossliebental (near Odessa) where, in the presence of Prior Grambaum and the parish priest, Johann Wilsdorf, he informed the assembled district and village elders of his opinions regarding the South Russian (German) colonists, and directed that this be made known to all area administrators and mayors. He made the following points:

1) That the area and village elders, like those of the Mennonite colonies are, with true zeal and strict conscientiousness as fathers over children, to exercise supervision over the colonists entrusted to them.

2) That the Mennonite colonies are to serve as models and that the other colonies and colonists are to imitate them in matters of agriculture and economy.

3) If the Area Administrators and mayors elected by the colonists out of their midst will not fulfill the above goals, he, the Minister, will appoint Area Administrators from the Mennonite colonies and install them in their stead."

K.

SUMMARY PRESENTATION OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL AND SPIRITUAL COURSE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLDER MENNONITE CHURCHES IN RUSSIA FROM 1860 TO 1910

XLIII.
STATISTICS AND PERSONAL DATA OF THE CLERGY

§414 We shall here enumerate again the churches given in *#63(2)* and *#73* and in connection with them those newly established. With regard to the preachers we shall go back as far as possible. In Mennonite history, as the history of a people small in number, or of a large family, names are of great importance for sentiment and fact.

§415 A. Churches of the Chortitza District or of Chortitza Origin.

1. The Flemish Chortitza Church, established 1789, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Post Office: Chortitza, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Elders, ministers (formerly called "teachers of the church") and deacons, as far as we can ascertain their names and succession: Elder Behrend Penner, elected as president of the first immigrant church on the trip to South Russia in the winter of 1788-1789 in Dubrovna, Province of Mohilev, elected as elder in 1790 in Chortitza and confirmed in writing by the Prussian eldership, died July 29, 1791; Jacob Wiens, minister, elected 1788/89 in Dubrovna; Gerhard Neufeld, like the former; Johann Wiebe, elected directly as elder, 1791, ordained by Cornelius Warkentin in 1794, died March 31, 1823; co-elder David Epp, elected as minister in 1791, ordained as elder by C. Warkentin in 1794, died September 1802 (see above *#55* "Privileges"); Peter Dyck, 1794; Gerhard Enss, 1794; David Giesbrecht, 1794; co-elder Bernhard Bergen (according to other sources Peter Bargen), 1802-09; Elder Jacob Dyck, co-elder 1812, elder 1823, died October 18, 1854 (see above *#57* "Letters of Counsel"); Jacob Dyck, Jr., preacher since (?), co-elder since June 1, 1851, died March 5, 1855; Heinrich Penner, minister, '12. (Note: From here on we shall abbreviate the year of appointment by omitting "18.")

Jacob Regier, '24; David Wiens, '39; Jacob Wiens, '43; Peter Dyck '43; Jacob Claassen, '45; Peter Willms '48; Gerhard Dyck, minister, '48, elder '55-'85, died in retirement May 11, '87; Jakob Paethkau, minister, '51; Peter Harms, '56; Johann Dyck, '56; Heinrich Bergen, '56. Known deacons elected before 1860: Dietrich Dyck '39; Jacob Klassen '44; Carl Grunau, '46; Gerhard Loewen, '56. Ministers elected 1860 and later: Isaak de Veer, '60; Johann Klassen, '62; Heinrich Epp, minister, '64, elder, '85, died April 11, '96; Jacob Penner, minister, '69; in retirement since 1904 up to the present, December 1910; Cornelius Grunau, '73, retired since 1904; Isaak Dyck, minister, '76, elder, April 25, '96. (Note this style: "96-" from here on means: "officiates from 1896 up to the present, December 1910"; where we are not sure, the dash is omitted; the year of death is indicated only where we believe to have definite information.) Dietrich Dyck '77; Wilhelm Dyck '77; Johann Wiebe '80; Jacob Rempel (f.)[1] '80, since '04 at the Orenburg settlement; Heinrich Siemens (f.) '80-; Abram Penner (formerly t.[2] now f.) '80-'04, retired -; David Epp (sse.)[3] now t. (see above "Schools and Publications") '86-; Jakob Sawatzky (sse, now f. and wheel wright), '86-; Johann Epp (sse was sst., preacher at forestry camps, is landed estate owner), '86-; Isaak Lehn (sse., was t., is f.), '93- (keeps the Chortitza Church register); Peter Penner, Kronstal, Kanzerovka, '96; Gerhard Loewen (sse., is t.), '96'; Dietrich Pauls (sse., is t.) '96-; Peter Johann Penner (sse., is sst., see above "Chortitza Secondary School"), '98-; Abram Penner (sse., was t., is proprietor of steam flour mill), '98-; David Rempel (sse., is t.), '01- (keeps the Osterwick Church register); Gerhard Klassen (sse., f.), '01-; Johann Klassen (sse., graduate of the Basel Evangelical Seminary, sst. (see above "Chortitza Secondary School") '02-; Gerhard Siemens (f.), '05-; Johann Giesbrecht (f.), '05-; Peter Koop (sse., graduate of the Basel Evangelical Seminary, proprietor of a factory), '06-; Johann Redekop (f.), '06-; Wilhelm Janzen (f.), '08-. Deacons elected after 1860: Bernhard Wiebe '70; Jakob Klassen, '80-'04, retired -; Julius Loewen, '88 (went to Arkadak 1910); Abram Harms, '06-; Gerhard Pries (sse., was t., is f.), '08-; Peter Buhr, '10- (keeps the Burwalde Church register).

The Chortitza mother church has four parishes: Chortitza, Neuenburg, Osterwick, and Burwalde, in each of the four mentioned places a church building, a fifth in Einlage; in those villages where there is no church building services are held every two weeks in the schools.

1(2) Bergtal congregation, formerly a branch of Chortitza, District of Mariupol, Province of Ekaterinoslav, from 1836 to 1874. Elders, ministers and deacons: Elder Jacob Braun, '40-; Elder Gerhard Wiebe since (?); Abram Claassen, minister, '39; Abram Bergen, '43; Abram Jakob Friesen of Sparrau, '49; Franz Dyck, '54; deacons: Johann Klippenstein, deacon, '38; Gerhard Wiebe (later elder ?), '54-. As we

know, the church emigrated to America in 1874.

1(3). Chortitza Branch "Grossfuerstenland," District of Melitopol, Province of Taurida, since 1864. Post Office Verchny Rogachik, Province of Taurida, village of Sergeievka.

Ministers and deacons: (The elder for some time was Johann Wiebe, who emigrated to America in 1874.) Ministers: Franz Bueckert, '66; Isaak Dyck (see above "Elders"); Abram Krueger, '76; Abram Janzen, '80; Peter Lepp (f.), '85, present church leader; Isaak Warkentin (f.), '89-; Peter Niebuhr (f.), '04-; Jacob Giesbrecht, '05; deacons: Klaas Peters, '85; Heinrich Bernhard Penner, '04- (keeps the church register).

Church services are held in the schools.

1(4). Chortitza Branch Borosenko, Volost Novosofieskaia, Nikolaital, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav, and Nepliuievka, Volost Alexeievka, 2 villages: Steinau, Starosavodskaia and Blumenfeld, Kisslitschevataia, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav, since 1870.

Post Office for both parishes: Nikopol, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Ministers and deacons: ministers: Isaak Ens (f.), '89 (keeps the church register); Kornelius Penner (f.), '89-; Peter Friesen (f.), '93-; Johann Funk (f.), 1900-; Franz Penner (f.), 1900-; Abram Olfert (f.), '02-; Martin Hamm (f.), '02-; Heinrich Klassen (f.), '02-; Heinrich Sawatzky (f.), '06-; deacons: Martin Hamm 1900 (see "Ministers"); Heinrich Klassen (?).

Church services are held in the schools (?).

1(5). Chortitza Branch Nikolaifeld ("Nikolaipol," "Jasykovo"), Volost Nikolaipol, District and Province of Ekaterinoslav, since 1869.

Post Office Nikolaipol, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Ministers and deacons: Ministers: Peter Penner, '65; Isaak Klassen, '71; Anton Loewen (f., was forestry camps minister), '71, church leader; Martin Dyck, '76; Heinrich Rempel, '76; Heinrich Siemens, '80; Heinrich Loewen (sse, f.), '85-; Jakob Siemens (sse, f.), '88-; Kornelius Lehn (sse, f.), '88-; Aron Klassen (f.), '05-; Klaas Quiering (f., deacon '05-'08, kept church register), '08-; Peter Schulz (proprietor of steam flour mill), '08-; Deacons: Johann von Kempen, '79; Johann Rempel, '08 (keeps church register)-.

Church building in Nikolaipol.

1(6). Former Chortitza Branch Neu-Chortitza (Baratov) since 1872, Marianovskaia Volost, District of Verchnedneprovsk. 2 villages: Neu-Chortitza and Gnadental, Vodianaia.

Post Office Sofievka, Province of Ekaterinoslav, and "Schliachtin"

since 1874, Vesselotiernovskaia Volost, District of Verchnedneprovsk, 2 villages: Gruenfeld, Selenopol and Steinfeld, Kanenopol.

Post Office Vesselotiernovskaia, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Included are also the Mennonite "model farmers" in the Jewish colonies (Novopodlsk) in the District of Khersson and the localities Alexandrovskaia, "Kusmitzky," Miloradovka, etc.

Independent church since 1910. Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Jacob Paethkau (sse, f.), minister '66, was church leader, kept the church register, elder since Sept. 13, 1910-; Jacob Epp, '52; Gerhard Dyck, '56; Gerhard Enns, Sr., '66; Anton Sudermann, '70; Gerhard Enns, Jr., '70; Dietrich Epp, '72; Cornelius Rempel, '79; Jakob Klassen, '80; Abram Penner, '80; Heinrich Dyck, '84; Klaas Wiebe, '84; Aron Warkentin (sse, was teacher, is f.), '90-; Peter Penner (f.), '90-; Jacob Baerg '92 (?); Dietrich Goerzen, '98 (?); Peter Wilhelm Sawatzky (deacon '97-'05), '05 (?); Abram Krueger (sse, f.), '97-. Deacons: Jacob von Kampen, '72; Peter Neufeld, '92; Gerhard Ens, '05-.

Church building in Neu-Chortitza and in Gruenfeld.

1(7). Former Chortitza Branch "Ignatievo" or New-York, District of Bachmut, Province of Ekaterinoslav, since 1889.

Post Office New-York, District of Bachmut.

Independent church since 1900. Elders, ministers and deacons: Elder: Abram Unrau (sse, was teacher, is f.), minister and leader of the church, '90, elder 1900-. Ministers: Isaak Hildebrand (sse, was teacher, is f.), '90-; Jacob Lehn (sse, was teacher, is f.), '91-; Johann Nikkel (was sst), '95-; Franz Bueckert, Sr. (f.), '98-; Jakob Wiebe, '02 (?); Peter Hildebrand (f.), '08-; Johann Epp (f.), '08-; Abram Wiens (f.), '08-; Franz Bueckert, Jr. (f.), 1900-; Johann Guenther (f.), 1900-. Deacons: (?).

Church building in New-York.

Branch churches of New-York:

a) Grigorievka, District of Isium, Province of Kharkov. Ministers: Abram Krueger, '76-; ? Peter Funck (?), -?-.[4]

b) Borissovo, District of Bachmut. Wilhelm Dyck, '77-? Heinrich Paethkau, '97 -?-; Daniel Loewen, '04 -?-.

1(8). Former Chortitza Branch Dieievka, "Orenburg," District and Province of Orenburg, since 1894.

Post Office Dieievka, Province of Orenburg.

Independent church since 1899. Elders, ministers and deacons: Elder: Abram Penner (f.), minister, '96, elder since Aug. 1899, resigned



a) Mennonite Church, Chortitza.



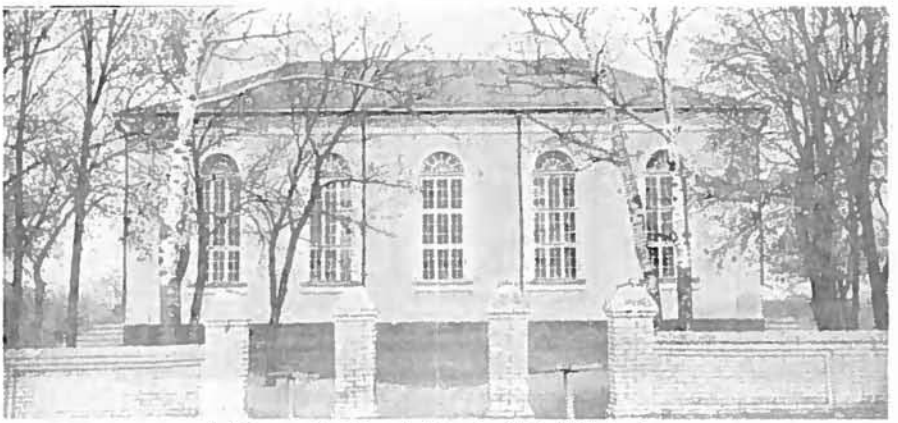
b) Mennonite Church, Kronsweide.



c) Mennonite Church, Einlage (Kitschkas).



d) Mennonite Church, Ohrloff, Molotschna.



e) Mennonite Church, Gnadenfeld, Molotschna.



f) Mennonite Church, Neu-Halbstadt, Molotschna.

from office May 1910. Ministers: Abram Olfert (f.), '94, church leader; Dietrich Lepp (f.), 94-; David Toews (f.), '96-; Heinrich Rempel (f.), '99-; Isaak Loewen (f.), 1900-; Peter Penner, Sr. (f.), '02-; Peter Dyck (sse, was teacher, is merchant), '03-; Dietrich Paethkau (sse, f.), '03-. Deacons: ? -?-.

Church services are held in schools.

N.B. As Chortitza branches we must also mention the city churches:

a) Ekaterinoslav: church leader and minister, D. H. Epp (see above, "Chortitza Church" and "Publications").

b) Nikopol: church leader and minister, Abram Penner (see above "Chortitza Church" and "Village Schools, Chortitza District").

II. The Frisian Church Kronsweide—Schoenwiese—Kronsgarten.

It had its origin with the Chortitza settlement 1789. The members of this church constitute perhaps one-seventh of all residents of the "Old Colony" and live among the members of the Chortitza Church, predominantly however in the villages Kronsweide, Schoenwiese, Chortitza Island, and Neu-Schoensee, a settlement on private land, Dimitrovka, the residence of the elder.

Post Office address of the elder: Lioshino, Ekaterinoslav railroad.

Church buildings in Kronsweide (Post Office Chortitza, Province of Ekaterinoslav), Schoenwiese (Post Office Alexandrovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav) and Kronsgarten (special meeting place in the school house). The "Kronsweide" settlers, together with the "Chortitza" churches, built according to the Chortitza model.

Elders, ministers and deacons: elders: (N.) Klassen ? - died 1794; Heinrich Janzen, 1800—died '24; Jacob Hildebrand, minister, '25, elder, '26—died '67; Peter Klassen, minister '60, elder, '67, died 1902; Jacob Wiebe (sse, t.), minister, '81, elder 1902, died '07; Johann Peter Klassen (sse, was t., is f.), minister '04, elder '07-. Ministers: Jacob Schoett, elected 1788/89 in Dubrovna (see above, "Chortitza"); Heinrich Arndt, Franz Bannmann and Cornelius von Riesen, all three were elected under the leadership of Elder Cornelius Warkentin, 1794; -?-; Peter Block, '33; Johann Claassen, '47 (both in Kronsgarten); Heinrich Pauls (Rosental), '36; Heinrich Goerz (Kronsweide), '56; Cornelius Pauls (Kronsweide), '56; Peter Krahn (Schoenwiese), '56; Jacob Janzen (Schoenwiese), '56; Cornelius Pauls (Neuschoenwiese, the above?, formerly Kronsweide?), '56; Heinrich Goerz (Neuschoenwiese, same as Cornelius Pauls, Kronsweide ?), '56; retired-; Cornelius Friesen (Kronsweide), '70; Bernhard Hildebrand (f.), '70-; Cornelius Pauls (f.), '81-; Andreas Vogt (f.), '85-; Heinrich Peters (f.), '87-; Peter Plenert (f.), '87-; Jakob Rempel (f.), '98-; (Peter Heinrichs, Einlage, '04?); (Heinrich Huebert '04?); Abram

Klassen (f.) since ?-; Bernhard Unrau (sse, was t., is f.), '10-; Johann Peters (f.), '10-. (After their call both of the last named have gone to the Alliance Bible School in Berlin.) Deacons: Peter Janzen (Schoenwiese), '25; Peter Krause (Kronsweide), '30; Dirk Ens (Kronsgarten), '39; Jacob Janzen (Schoenwiese or Neuschoenwiese ?), '60-?-; Franz Funk (Kronsweide), '75 -?-.

§416 B. Congregations of the Molotschna District or of Molotschna Origin

1. Flemish Mother-Church, Ohrloff—Petershagen—Halbstadt.

a) Its existence from 1804 to 1824.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Jacob Enns, elected as minister, still in Prussia (?), elder 1804, died 1818; Jacob Fast, minister (since ?), elder 1818, died 1821; Bernhard Fast, Halbstadt-Tiege, minister, 1814, elder Jan. 13, 1821 (-24 in this undivided mother-church), died 1860. The ministers ("teachers") of this first church, we believe, are not all known to us, and in the case of others we do not know the duration of office. We can name the following: Jacob Warkentin, later the first elder in Lichtenau; Johann Friesen; David Hiebert, Lindenau; Franz Wienz (these four left with the Lichtenau Church in 1824; see above, *#37*); Klaas Reimer, elected as minister in 1801 in Prussia "near Danzig," later became elder of the "Kleine Gemeinde," see above, *#36*; Cornelius Janzen, left with Reimer at the forming of the "Kleine Gemeinde"; Peter Enss 22 -?-.

Note 1. With regard to the clergy of the "Kleine Gemeinde" which separated in 1812-1816 we add to the information given in *##36* and *38*: Elder Johann Friesen, minister '40, elder '47; ministers: Claas Friesen, Rosenort, '38; Abram Friesen '46; Johann Dyck, Muntau, '49; Heinrich Enz, '51. Deacons: Claas Friesen, Neukirch, '51; Jacob Friesen, '52.

Note 2. In the Huttertal Church (see above *##4,f* and *6,d*) there were the following spiritual leaders: Elder George Wallner, '25, co-elder Zacharias Walther, '25, minister and teacher Jacob Hofer, '25, David Hofer, '39.

b) Partial congregations Ohrloff-Petershagen I. (1824-58), then Ohrloff-Halbstadt, and since 1873, Neukirch (to 1895).

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Bernhard Fast (above), '24-'60; Johann Harder, Blumstein, minister '55, elder, '60-'76; Abram Goerz, minister, '75, elder, '76. Ministers: Peter Enss (see above); Peter Neufeld, Rosenort (since ?); Abram Isaak, Tiege, '24; Abram Rempel, Schoensee, '32; Johann Dyck, Ladekopp, '33 (went over to Lichtenau-Petershagen in 1858); Cornelius Penner, Altonau, '34; Jacob Martens,

Tiegenhagen, '48; Franz Isaak, Tiege, '50 (he has often been mentioned in this book. In later life he withdrew from office and church and took a position very close to that of the "Friends of Jerusalem"); Johann Regier, Ohrloff, '57; Franz Klassen, Ladekopp, '60; Bernhard Harder, Halbstadt, '60; Cornelius Isaak, Rueckenau; Abram Wiens, Schoenau (f.), '67, retired-; Abram Toews, Tiegenhagen, '67; Jakob Lettkemann, Kleefeld (later joined the M.B. Church); Abram Dyck, Pordenau, '68; Heinrich Unruh, '70 (see further "Halbstadt Elders")-; Nikolai Ediger, Altonau, '75; Johann Martens, Muntau (see further "Sagradovka"), '75; Johann Dyck, Altonau, '75 (soon resigned from office); Peter Loewen, Muntau, '75; Jakob Hiebert, Waldheim, '77; Peter Toews, Alexanderkrone, '77; Klaas Isaak, Schoenau, '80 (soon resigned from office); Bernhard Wiens (was church leader, forestry camps minister, now farmer), '80 (see below "Ohrloff, II")-; Peter Bergmann, Ladekopp, '80 (joned the M.B. Church); Franz Isaak, Altonau (was teacher, now farmer) -(?); Jakob Reimer, '82 (joined the M.B. Church); Abram Harder, Alexanderwohl, '83; Kornelius Fast, Prangenau, '83; K. Unruh, sst., Ohrloff, '83 (d. 1910); Heinrich Reimer, Lichtfelde (was church leader, forestry camps minister, now farmer), '83-; Isaak Ediger, '84 (see below "Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood," Lichtfelde); Peter Unruh, '84 (later joined the M.B. Church); Gerhard Harder, Neu-Halbstadt (graduate of the Halbstadt Pedagogical Secondary School, and of St. Chrischona, was teacher, see "Model School"; was itinerant minister of the General Mennonite Conference), '84- (see below, "Halbstadt"); Jakob Thiessen, Alexanderwohl (f.), '88-; Heinrich Harder, Neukirch, '88; Gerhard Epp, Lichtfelde (f.), '89-; Franz Willms, Tiegenhagen (f.), '90 (see below "Halbstadt"). Deacons: -?- Bernhard Friesen, Tiegenhagen, '20; Cornelius Wall, Ohrloff, '48; Peter Bergmann, Halbstadt, '54 (later joined Lichtfelde-Petershagen, became minister there); Dietrich Huebert, Altonau, '60; Peter Friesen, Tiegenhagen, '60; Johann Janzen, Neukirch, '64; Abram Dyck, Lichtfelde, '87 (see below "Ohrloff-Neukirch") -?-.

c) Smaller congregation at Ohrloff I. Neukirch from 1895 to the present (Dec. 1910).

Post Office Orlovo, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elder Abram Goerz—see above. Ministers: Abram Harder, Kornelius Fast, Heinrich Harder, Jakob Thiessen, Gerhard Epp, church leader (all five noted above); Jakob Wiens, Tiegerweide (sse, now teacher), '01-; Franz Penner, Tiege (f.), '04; Johann Wiens, Rosenort (f.), '04-. Deacons: Abram Dyck, named above-; Heinrich Neumann, Muensterberg (f.), '05-.

ca) Congregation at Herzenberg, Alexandrovka, since 1881 to 1895, branch of Ohrloff-Halbstadt-Neukirch, since 1895-of Ohrloff II-Neukirch;

District of Pavlograd, Province of Ekerinoslav.

Post Office Petropavlovka, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

Ministers: Kornelius Siemens, '81; Johann Woelk (f.), '92 -?-.

d) Separated congregation at Ohrloff II from 1895 to the present (Dec. 1910).

Post Office Orlovo, Province of Taurida.

Ministers: Bernhard Wiens (named above) church leader-; Peter Neufeld, Rosenort (f.), '76? (was formerly minister of the Lichtenau Church)-.

e) Halbstadt Church, former Ohrloff Branch, independent church since 1895.

Post Office Halbstadt, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elder Heinrich Unruh (noted above, was teacher, is farmer) minister, '70, elder 1896-. Ministers: Abram Wiens (noted above)-; Gerhard Harder (noted above)-; Franz Willms (noted above)-; Abram Loewen (sse, was forestry camps minister, is secretary of the forestry camps chairman), '02-. "Of the brethren elected to the office of minister in the course of the years, three have felt the duty to follow the call, but have not yet allowed themselves to be installed into office. The church has granted them the right to preach the Word in order that they can ascertain whether they have the necessary gifts for the position" (c.f. *#434*). Deacons: Peter Unruh (since ?) N.B. The main essentials of the circumstances under which the separation of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt-Neukirch Church into three independent congregations—Ohrloff I, Neukirch-Ohrloff II, and Halbstadt—took place will be given below in "Biographical" about "Elder Goerz" (*#432*).

II. The large or "purely Flemish"[5] congregation separated from Ohrloff: Lichtenau-Petershagen-Schoensee-Margenau-Pordenau from 1824 to 1842.

(cf. *##37, 59, 61,* and *63(2)*)

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elder Jacob Warkentin (named above) 1824-42. Ministers: Johann Friesen, Franz Wienz, David Hiebert (all three mentioned above); Abram Froese, Halbstadt, '24; Heinrich Wiens, Gnadenheim, '25 (see below "Margenau Elders"); Bernhard Matthias, Tiegerweide, '25; Jacob Bergmann, Tiege, '27; Heinrich Wiebe, Tiege, '27; Aron Penner, Pordenau, '29; Heinrich Neufeld, Rosenort, '30; Wilhelm Barg, Lindenau, '30; Johann Wiens, Rosenort, '30; Jacob Goossen, Schoensee, '37; Dirk Peters, Wernersdorf, '37; Heinrich Toews, Pordenau, '39 (see below "Pordenau Elders"); Isaak Sawatzky, Friedensdorf, '40; Jacob Fast, Landskrone, '40; Duerk Warkentin, Petershagen,

'41 (see below "Elders"). Deacons: Isaak Driedger, Rueckenau, '25; Gerhard Wall, Pordenau, '25; Johann Klassen, Ohrloff, '27; Aron Penner, Pordenau, '29 (minister named above ?); Cornelius Epp, Wernersdorf, '30; Isaak Hildebrandt, Tiegerweide, '31.

II(2). Lichtenau-Petershagen[6] congregation from 1852 to Dec. 1910.

Post Office Halbstadt, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elder Jacob Warkentin (named as minister above), elder 1824-1842 (became inactive upon administrative decree; see above *##37, 59* and *61*); Duerk Warkentin, Petershagen (named above), minister, '41, elder Sept. 29, 1842, died '69; Jacob Toews, Blumenort, minister, '62, elder, '69-'08, retired- (d. '09); Bernhard Epp, Lindenau (f.), minister '89, elder, '09. Ministers elected after the separation of the church into three churches or Elder-Districts in the year 1842: Johann Warkentin, Ohrloff, 44; Gerhard Fast, Petershagen (see below "Deacons"), '52; Jacob Bergmann, Ladekopp, '48; Johann Dyck, Ladekopp (minister for Ohrloff-Petershagen, '33, for Lichtenau-Petershagen"—deacon), '62 (?); Jakob Thiessen, Schoenau, '62; Jacob Dyck, Ladekopp, '69; Jakob Enns, Altonau, '73; Jakob Loewen, Muntau, '75; Johann Schmidt, Altonau, '76; Johann Braun, Blumstein (was teacher, is landed estate owner, see below "Samoilovka"), '76; Peter Neufeld, Rosenort (see above "Ohrloff II"), '76 (?); Hermann Enns, Muntau (f., see below "Samoilovka"), '80; Peter Fast, Ladekopp (f.), '80 (moved to Memrik); Johann Penner, Blumstein (pupil of Heinrich Franz, Sr., was teacher, is farmer), '85-; Abram Friesen, Blumenort ? Schoenau? (f.), '85-; Jakob Dueck, Blumenort (f.) since -?-; Kornelius Loewen, Blumstein (f.), '89-; Johann Warkentin, Ladekopp (f.), '91-; Abram Wiebe, Petershagen (f.), '99-; Jakob Loewen, Lichtenau (sse, was t., is f., joined the Lichtfelde Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood), '04-; Jakob Wittenberg, Fuerstenwerder (was f., is merchant), '04-(moved to Neu-Samara); N. Schmidt, Blumenort (sse, is teacher), '09-; N. Sudermann, Blumenort (f.), '09-; N. Doerksen, Fischau (after his appointment as minister he attended the Alliance Bible School in Berlin) since ? -?-. Deacons: (after 1842) Gerhard Fast, Petershagen (see above "Ministers") '48; Johann Warkentin, Rosenort, '51; Johann Klassen, Petershagen, '52 (Peter Klassen, Petershagen, '52?); Johann Wiens, Altonau, '62; Andreas Voth, Neu-Halbstadt, '68 (see above "School Board"); Jakob Dyck, Altonau, '73- (?); Johann Martens, Petershagen, '89-; -?-.

The first church building in Lichtenau was erected in 1826; a new, large one was built on the same place in about 1860.

The first church building for Lichtenau-Petershagen was erected in 1831, in Petershagen at the end of the village, towards Ladekopp; a new

one was built on the same place in 1890 (?).

Branches of Lichtenau-Petershagen in the District of Alexandrovsk, Province of Ekaterinoslav ("Brasol" etc.).

a) Schoenfeld, 1868-Dec. 1910. Post Office Gualaipole, Province of Ekaterinoslav. Ministers: Peter Neufeld, '73; Peter Enns, '77; Jakob Dueck (f.), '81-; Gerhard Toews (f.), '92-; Johann Fast (f.), '98-; Jakob Driedger (f.), '98- -?-. Deacons: Jakob Janzen, Blumenheim, '73-; Jakob Warkentin, Schoenfeld, '83- -?-. Church building in the village.

b) Rosenhof, 1870-Dec. 1910. Post Office Sofievka. Province of Ekaterinoslav. Ministers: Kornelius Epp (f.), '70-; Jakob Enns (f.), '73-; N. Enns and N. Thiessen, both at present, Dec. 1910, not yet installed into office; are attending the Alliance Bible School in Berlin. Deacon: Isaak Thiessen, '73- -?-. Church building in the village.

c) Blumenfeld, 1872-Dec. 1910. Post Office Gulaipole, Province of Ekaterinoslav. Ministers: Dietrich Janzen, '73; Gerhard Wiens (f.), '84-; Peter Schroeder, '04- -?-. Church building is in village.

II(3). Congregation at Margenau-(Alexanderkrone)[7] Landskrone from 1842 to Dec. 1910.

Post Office Gnadenfeld, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Heinrich Wiens (named above), minister, '25, elder, June 18, '42-46 (?47); banished into foreign country (see above *#37*), thereafter Margenau was served by the Pordenau Elder Heinrich Toews; Bernhard Peters, Gnadenheim, minister, '51 elder, '61-87, retired-; Heinrich Koop, Alexanderkrone (f.), minister, '81, elder for Margenau, '87-1901 (see below "Alexanderkrone"); Peter Friesen, Gnadental, minister '80, elder, '01- (d. '07); Gerhard Plett (was t., is f.), minister, '99, elected as elder, '07, ordained, '08-. Ministers (elected after 1842): Bernhard Peters (see above "Elder"), '51; Cornelius Epp, Gnadenheim, '51; Peter Regehr, Gnadental (f.), '67-, retired-; Isaak Sawatzky, Rueckenau, '67; Peter Braun, Steinfeld, '75; Jakob Voth, Landskrone (f.), '75-; David Loewen, Alexanderwohl, '75; Peter Fast, Hamberg, '84; Gerhard Enns, Friedensdorf (f.), '88-; Abram Ewert, Fuerstenwerder (f.), '89-; Aron Warkentin, Gnadental, '90; Abram Nickel, Apuchtin (f.), '95-?; Johann Duerksen, Landskrone (was t., is f., member of school council), '98-; Isaak Boldt, Paulsheim (sse, is f.), '04; Julius Thiessen, Paulsheim (sse, is t.), '04-; Peter Warkentin, Hierschau (f.), '04-; Johann Heidebrecht, Tiegerweide (sse, f.), '10- -?-. Deacons (elected after 1842) -?-: Bernhard Matthies, Tiegerweide, '75; Heinrich Schulz, Friedensdorf, since ?; Heinrich Kroeger, Rueckenau, since ? (both elected before 1888); Peter Willms, Fuerstenau, '88- -?-.

The first church building in Margenau was erected in 1832, in Landskrone in 1910.

II(4). Congregation in Pordenau from 1842 to Dec. 1910.

Post Office Gnadenfeld, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Heinrich Toews, Pordenau, minister, '39 (named above), elder Sept. 29, '42- (d. '68); Isaak Peters, minister since '66, elder, '68-'74; for several years the church was served by the Margenau elder; Diedrich Barg, Alexandertal, minister, '74, elder, '78-'94, retired-; Gerhard Regehr, Pordenau (was t., forestry camps minister, f.), minister, '94, elder, '04- (d. Jan. '10); Peter Epp, Elisabethtal (f.), minister, '96, elder April 19, '10-. Ministers (elected after 1842): Isebrand Friesen, Berdiansk, '48; Franz Toews, Pordenau, '49; Peter Dyck, Pastva, '49; Johann Goerzen, Grossweide, '51; Johann Neufeld, Mariental (f.), '74-; Isaak Braun, Konteniusfeld, '74; Johann Toews, Mariental, '76; Peter Dyck, Konteniusfeld, '84; Peter Ewert, Sparrau, '84-; Jakob Dyck, Elisabethtal (f.), '01-; Jakob Gerbrandt (graduate of Bethel College in America, itinerant minister of the General Conference in the Province of Ufa and in Siberia (see below), '01-; Gerhard Duerksen, Konteniusfeld (sse, t?, f.?), '03-; Daniel Janzen, Pordenau (sse, was t., is f.), '07-; Abram Wall, Klippenfeld (f.), '10-. Deacons (elected after 1842): David Fast, Pordenau, '48; Heinrich Barg, Mariental, '74-; Aron Wall, Pordenau, '84; Aron Matthies, Pordenau, '09-.

The first church building in Pordenau was erected in 1828, in its place a larger one in about 1860.

11(5). Schoensee congregation (from 1824 to 1842 a branch of Lichtenau, 1842 to 1903 sometimes of Margenau, sometimes of Lichtenau), independent from 1903 to December 1910.

Post Office Halbstadt, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elder: Heinrich Peters, Liebenau (f.), minister, '85; elder '03-. Ministers elected after 1842: Johann Goerzen, Schoensee, '51; Franz Regehr, Schoensee, '60; Johann Toews, Fabrikerwiese, '72; Peter Schellenberg, Schoensee, '72; Jakob Bergmann, Wernersdorf, '78; Bernhard Fast, Ladekopp, '85 (see below, "Siberia"); Wilhelm Peters, Wernersdorf (f.), '85-; Peter Toews, Fuerstenau (f.), '89 (?); Jakob Rennpenning, Fabrikerwiese (landed estate owner, manufacturer), '92-; Heinrich Dirks, Silberfeld (graduate of St. Chrischona) was later itinerant minister of the Gnadenfeld branches in the Crimea, '89; Bernhard Wiens (sse, is f.), '94- -?-. Deacons, elected after 1842: Peter Harder, Fuerstenau, '51; Johann Martens, Wernersdorf, '89- -?-.

The first church building in Schoensee was erected in 1831, the new one in 1909.

II(6). Alexanderkrone Church, Branch of Margenau 1890-1901, independent church 1901-December 1910.

Post Office Halbstadt, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elder: Heinrich Koop, Alexanderkrone (see above, "Margenau Elders"), elder of the independent Alexanderkrone Church since 1901. Ministers: Jakob Esau, Lichtfelde (sse, was t., is member of the School Board, f.), '87-; Heinrich Wiens, Steinfeld (f.), '91-?; Peter Peters, Prangenau (sse, was t., is f.), '01-; Johann Enns, Steinfeld (sse, was t., is f?), '01- -?-. Deacon: Abram Matthies since ? -?-.

The church building in Alexanderkrone was erected in 1890.

III. The Frisian congregation Rudnerweide from 1820 to December 1910.

Post Office Gnadenfeld, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Franz Goerz, Sr., confirmed as elder in Prussia 1819, elder of the Rudnerweide Church 1820 (d. 1835); Benjamin Ratzlaff, Rudnerweide, minister, '19 (already in Prussia ?), elder, '35-'61, retired - (d. '74 in America); Franz Goerz, Jr., Gnadenfeld, minister, '50, elder, '61-'91, retired, d. 1901; David Nickel, Grossweide (was t., is member of School Board, f.), minister, '82, elder, Sept. 29, '91-. Ministers: -?- Johann Wiebe, Rudnerweide, '33; Jacob Janzen, Schardau, '33; Johann Peters, Friedensdorf, '33; Reinhard Hiebert, Friedensdorf, '47; Abram Regehr, Rudnerweide, '53; Johann Becker, Franztal, '53; Abram Riediger, Prangenau, '53 (? Franz Goerz, Gnadenfeld, '53?); Peter Goerz, Steinfeld, '59; Heinrich Franz, Rudnerweide, '60; Daniel Janzen, Schardau, '60; Heinrich Stobbe, Hierschau, '64; Dietrich Klassen, Friedensdorf?, Gnadenheim?, '72; Gerhard Dirks, Franztal, '72; Abram Unrau, Grossweide?, Sparrau (f.), '72-; Jakob Becker, Rudnerweide (f.), '82-; Peter Unrau, Rudnerweide (f.), '83-; Johann Janz, Grossweide (f.), '83-; Johann Baergen, Friedensdorf, '92; Gerhard Nickel, Gnadenfeld (graduate of the Barmen Missionhouse, ordained as missionary and elder, when?, missionary in Sumatra, at present forestry camps minister)-; Gerhard Dirks, Paulsheim (sse, was t., is f.), '92-; Peter Schroeder, Elisabethtal ?, Gnadenheim (f.), 1900-; Heinrich Abrams, Franztal (f.), 1900-; Peter Dirks, Franztal (f.), '03-; Abram Boldt, Sparrau (fs.), '05-; Gerhard Flaming, Rudnerweide (see, was t., is f.), '05-; Jakob Kroeker, Rudnerweide (f.), '10-; David Janzen, Rudnerweide (f.), '10-. Deacons: Cornelius Ruechert, Franztal, '19; Gerhardt Kliewer, Schardau, '40; David Nickel, Rudnerweide, '40; David Fast, Pastva, '40; Cornelius Dyck, Schardau, '63; Gerhard Loewens, Rudnerweide, '72; Johann Wiebe, Rudnerweide, '98-; David Loewens, Rudnerweide, '05-.

The church building in Rudnerweide was erected in 1822, later repeatedly enlarged.

Berdiansk congregation (since ?)

This church is mentioned in Mannhardt's Yearbook, 1857, as a branch of Pordenau with Minister Isebrand Friesen, Berdiansk, elected 1848 (mentioned above); later the church was served by the Gnadenfeld elder; then, in the 60s the church became independent under Elder Leonhard Sudermann, already a minister in the 50s (see above "Emigration") after Sudermann's emigration in 1874 the church was again served by the Gnadenfeld elder, at present by the Rudnerweide elder. Only a few ministers are known to us -?- Abram Sudermann, Berdiansk, '23; Isebrand Friesen, '48; Jakob Buhler, Berdiansk, since ? -?-; Abram Jantzen, Berdiansk, '81 (mentioned above, "Gnadenfeld"); Leonhard Sudermann, Berdiansk (sse, landed estate owner), '03, leader of the church.

IV. The Old Flemish Churches.

IV(1). The Alexanderwohl congregation from 1820 to December 1910.

Post Office Halbstadt, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Peter Wedel, minister (in Prussia or Poland?) 1813, elder 1814,[8] in Russia 1820, '70- (d. '71). (Herewith we correct our erroneous memorandum above, *#63(2)*, D, that Elder Wedel had emigrated to America in 1874); Jakob Buller, minister, '59, elder, '70-'74 (emigrated to America in 1874 with the entire governing body, as far as we know, and with by far the greater part of the church.); Johann Schartner (f.), minister, '52 (? 51 ? at Karolswalde in Volhynia ?), elder for Alexanderwohl, April 9, '77. Ministers: Heinrich Buller (in Prussia or Poland), 1813; -?- David Schroeder, Landskrone, '49; Peter Voth, Landskrone, '48; -?- Heinrich Richert, '59; Dietrich Gaeddert since ? -?-. Apparently almost all of the ministers of Neu-Alexanderwohl in America, were elected in Russia. -?- Newly elected after the emigration: Peter Pankratz, Alexanderwohl, '76; Tobias Janz, Landskrone, '76; David Pankratz, Landskrone, '82; Benjamin Retzlaff, Sr., Gnadenfeld (f.), '82-; Gerhard Wiebe, Landskrone, '83; Kornelius Warkentin, Rudnerweide, '85; David Gaeddert, Liebenau, '85; Abram Schartner, Waldheim, '88 (?); Banjamin Retzlaff, Jr., Gnadenfeld (sse, graduate of St. Chrischona, was sst, is member of the School Board, f.), '96-; Isaak Klassen, Alexanderwohl (f.), '06-; Jakob Richert, Waldheim (f.), '06-. Deacons: -?- Gerhard Bergen, Friedensdorf, '48; -?- David Schroeder, Landskrone, '80; Jakob Buller, Waldheim, '80; Gerhard Brandt, Landskrone, '94-.

The church building in Alexanderwohl was erected in 1827.

IV(2). The Gnadenfeld congregation from 1835 to December 1910.

Post Office Gnadenfeld, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Wilhelm Lange (in Brenkenshofwalde, Prussia, 1812-'35) in Gnadenfeld 1835-'41; Friedrich Wilhelm Lange, minister, '38, elder, '41-'49 (withdrew from office); August Lenzmann, Gnadenfeld, minister, '51, elder May 23, 1854- (d. '77); Heinrich Dirks, Gnadenfeld, minister, '67, ordained as elder and missionary, August 31, 1869; functions as elder of the Gnadenfeld Church since '81-. Ministers: Abram Retzlaff, Wilhelm Lange and Benjamin Lange, still in Prussia; the two Langes later withdrew from office (see above, *#50*); -?- Abram Sudermann, Berdiansk, '23, elected in which church? (see below, "Berdiansk"); Nikolai Schmidt, Steinbach, '51 (was later a co-founder of the "Temple Church"—*#52*); Bernhard Penner, Gnadenfeld, '52; Andreas Flaming, Schardau, '52; Gerhard Thomsen, Neukirch, '64; Aron Rempel, Gnadenfeld, '64 (d. '10); David Dirks (student of H. Franz, Sr., was teacher, is farmer, presently minister of the Gnadenfeld Branch, Neuschirin, Crimea), '78-; Heinrich Johann Janzen, Steinbach-Gnadenfeld (see above "Schools," "School Board," "School for the Deaf," was forestry camps minister),[9] '78- (d. '04); Abram Jantzen , Berdiansk, '81 (see above "Berdiansk"); Wilhelm Neufeld (see above "Halbstadt Secondary School"), '88-; Johann Retzlaff (sse, was forestry camps minister, is teacher, presently at the Gnadenfeld Branch, Laschkarevo, Terek District), '90-; Heinrich Heinrich Dirks, Jr. (sse, graduate of the Barmen Mission House, was sst, is f.), '95-; Abram Aron Klassen (sse, graduate of the Barmen Mission House, was sst, presently salaried minister of the Gnadenfeld Branch, Ogus-Tobe and Sarona, Crimea; member of the school board in the Crimea), '95-; Gustaf Aron Rempel (graduate of St. Chrischona and Bethel College, was missionary at Jangjir, India, presently elder in Siberia, see below; ordained as missionary and elder), '99-; Gustaf Gustaf Rempel (sse, graduate of the Basel Seminary, auditor at the teacher training institute, Muristalden, at Bern, was previously teacher, presently salaried minister for Silberfeld, District of Alexandrovsk), 1900-; Abram Abram Klassen, Grossweide, '03-? David Heinrich Dirks, Jr. (sse, graduate of St. Chrischona and the Baptist Seminary in Hamburg, studied in Rotterdam, was teacher, is missionary in Sumatra, ordained as missionary and elder), '05-; Salomon Ediger (sse, graduate of Basel Seminary, is sst—see above "Ohrloff Secondary School"), '05-; Jakob Heinrich Janzen (sse, see above "Ohrloff School for Girls"), '06-; Johann Heinrich Janzen (sse, graduate of Feodosia Teacher Training Institute, see above "Ohrloff Secondary School"), '09-; Heinrich Friesen (sse, was teacher, is farmer, at present minister of the branch Sarona,

Crimea), '09-. Deacons: -?- Jacob Voth, Gnadenfeld, '52; Heinrich Unruh, Gnadenfeld, '52; Karl Schmidt (?); -?- Heinrich Retzlaff, Gnadenfeld, '98-; Heinrich Unruh, Gnadenfeld, '03-.

The church building in Gnadenfeld was erected in 1854.

Gnadenfeld Branches: a) in the Crimea: 1) Sarona, 2) Ogus-Tobe, 3) Neuschirin; b) Laschkarevo in the Terek District. The ministers are mentioned above.

IV(3). The Waldheim congregation from 1836 to December 1910.

Post Office Waldheim, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Peter[10] Schmidt (ordained as elder in Ostrog, Volhynia) in Waldheim since ? to 1844 (moved away from Waldheim); Benjamin Wedel, about 1866; Kornelius Dirks, minister, '76, elder, '77 to?, presently elder of the church at the Kuban, see below. If the church was without an elder, it was served by Alexanderwohl or Gnadenfeld. Ministers: Peter Pankratz, Waldheim (already elected in Poland or Volhynia), 1822; David Dirks (at the same place), '32; Johann Ratzlaff, Waldheim, '49; Peter Ratzlaff, Waldheim, '53; Cornelius Richert, Waldheim, '53; -?- Johann Goerzen, Gandenheim (f.), '88, leader. Deacons: -?- Johann Voth, Waldheim, '53; Johann Schmidt, '77-? Johann Ewert, Waldheim, since ? -?-.

The congregation has a church building at this place.

N.B.! Like the congregations of the Chortitza District and origin, the Molotschna congregations and their settlements conduct their worship services in the schools and according to a definite order or according to felt needs. The information given by us in the end of the footnote to *#295* states that in the summer of 1910 the church services were forbidden in schools in the Province of Taurida. Before the final printing of this page we can add that the prohibition has been anulled through a decree[11] by the provincial administration. We are glad that our confidently expressed hope and conviction in this matter, expressed in *#297*, have been justified so soon—more correctly, already had been justified when we wrote the sentence!

B(2). The Mennonite Churches formed by the settlers from the Molotschna Districts. §417

I. In the Crimea. a) The Karassan congregation from 1862 to December 1910.

Post Office Karassan, Province of Taurida.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Jakob Wiebe (see above, "Emigration," *#280* and "Halbstadt Secondary School") minister?, elder,

'62- (d. Feb. 10, 1880); Heinrich Unruh, minister, '74, elder, '80- (d. Oct. 7, 1883); Friedrich Raabe, minister, '74, elder, '84-'84 for Karassan, then for Ettingerbrun, now "Busau"; Abram Friesen (was t., is f., member of the school board), minister, '75, elder May 8, '84-. Ministers: Peter Engbrecht, '64; Johann Kroeker, '71; Peter Dueck, '72; Abram Harder (joined the M.B. Church); Bernhard Friesen (joined the M.B. Church); Abram Wall (joined the M.B. Church); Johann Friesen (was t., is f.), '82-; Abram Huebert (f.), '90-; Abram Klassen, '94; August Strauss (f., member of the school board), '94-; Johann Tjahrt (sse, was t., is landed estate owner), '96-; Heinrich Rempel (sse, was t., graduate of St. Chrischona, was member of the School Board), '96; Kornelius Wiens (f., minister on forestry camps), '99-; Heinrich Reimer (f.), '99-; David Abrahams (f.), '99-; Johann Harder (f.), 1900-; Wilhelm Bartel (landed estate owner), '02-; Peter Harder, '03; Johann Fehdrau (sse, is f.), '03-; Hermann Rempel (sse, was t., is f., member of the School Board), '03-; Wilhelm Voth (f.), '05-; Abram Klassen (was t., is forestry camps minister) since ?-; Kornelius Janzen (sse, theological student at the University of Bern, is principal of the secondary school in Spat, elected at Sagradovka)-. Deacons: Jakob Wall, '62; Gerhard Kornelius Wall (was member of the school board), '63- (?); Philip Wiebe, '74; Jakob Driediger (since ?); J. Dueck, '96-; Gerhard Bernhard Wall, '02-; Johann Esau, '02; Gerhard Schellenberg, Jr. (sse), '05-.

The church building is in Karassan.

b) The Busau-Aktatschi congregation (formerly Ettingerbrun) from 1884 to December 1910.

Post Office Aibary, Province of Taurida.

In 1884 the church in the Crimea divided into the larger, called "Karassan," and the smaller, then called "Ettingerbrun," later "Busau-Aktatschi." For the Karassan Church Elder Abram Friesen was called (mentioned above), for Ettingerbrun-Busau Friedrich Raabe functioned as elder (mentioned above) from 1884 to 1890, at which time he resigned and soon died. "In general the time from 1890 to 1900 was a sad one for our church. Several ministers left the church and joined the M.B. Church, others were elected but did not accept office. . . . Our church was served with baptism and the Lord's Supper by Br. Abram Friesen, Karassan." (Reporter) A local elder was called in the person of Heinrich Heinrich Martins (see above "School Board in the Crimea"), minister, '93, elder, April 2, 1901-(d. Nov. '05); Peter Friedrichsen (f., member of the school board), minister, '03, elder, May 7, '06-. Ministers: Peter Stobbe (f.), '90-'93 (moved to the Samara settlement); Abram Rempel, '90; Jakob Harder (f.), '94; minister for Karassan, now for Busau-; Abram Baerg (sse, was t., is f.), '97-; Heinrich Dueck (f.), '01 (see below,

"Deacons")-; Peter Wohlgemut (f.), '03-. Deacons: Heinrich Dueck, '97; Peter Martins, '01; -; Gerhard Rempel, '01-. "Brethren who already preach, but have not yet been installed into office" (candidates): Karl Friedrichsen (sse, graduate of St. Chrischona, principal of the Karassan Secondary School; "preaches voluntarily with permission of the church, not elected"), '05-; "Elected brethren, who have served for some time, but have not been installed:" Franz Wiens (f.) since ?; Peter Martins (f.) (see above "Deacons), '08-; Wilhelm Voth (f.), since ?-.

The congregation conducts its worship services in the schools.

II. The Nikolaifeld-Sagradovka congregation, District and Province of Kherson, from 1872 to December 1910.

Post Office Tiege, Province of Kherson.

Since this congregation has a very characteristic and noteworthy history of development as a congregation of settlers, we shall use here with gratitude an historical review put at our disposal by one who took a very active part in the matter. To maintain impartiality we state that the honored reporter had an attitude of opposition and later withdrew from the church. He writes:

"The Nikolaifeld Mennonite Church at Sagradovka exists since 1872. Up to 1895 it had the name 'Tiege Parish,' because at the founding of the settlement the intention was to build the church in the Tiege Colony. When, however, the church was built, not in Tiege, but in Nikolaifeld, it became necessary to change the name of the church correspondingly; the more so because the M.B. Church had erected its church building in Tiege. The Mennonite Church was organized by members of several different Mennonite congregations from the Molotschna and the Crimea. Since they were used to different practices and regulations, it was not easy to unite them now into one church. A great blessing for the Sagradovka Church was that, from the beginning, it had faithful and capable men as leaders and founders, of whom mention must be made. First to be noted is Elder Wilhelm Voth. He was a man weak in body but strong in mind. Through goal-conscious action, firm will and great energy, he was successful in controlling the refractory characters and in subordinating them. True, because of his inflexibility he had many opponents during the first years, but in time his firmness gained him great respect in the church. He was, as the saying goes, an independent man. In his expositions he could also be quite clear. His sermons frequently took the form of reprimands. He was very conscientious. Doubtless the Sagradovka settlement owed him much. Yet he also had a weak side and as a rule he showed it when he dealt with those who declared themselves to be believing, converted, children of God. For these he seemed to have no understanding. He often

suspected spiritual pride in them. One consequence was that the 'believers' withdrew from him. He was also an outspoken opponent of the 'Mennonite Brethren Church.' Itinerant preachers of this church usually avoided the village in which he lived. He held the office of elder until 1895. His successor was Gerhard Warkentin. Through gentleness and a mild bearing he understood how to win the favor and love of the large majority of the church. He was frequently called upon to serve at weddings, funerals and other functions. He also served the church sacrificially for many years. He died in 1902.

"The first co-workers of these two were ministers Peter Bargen, Wilhelm Sudermann, Johann Kroeker, Bernhard Wiens, and others. Most of these men had been teachers and had the undisputed gift to teach others, to edify and admonish. With the exception of one minister they all spoke freely, i.e., they did not read their sermons. With conviction and power and in the Holy Ghost they testified to repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Often in those years have I heard the statement by visiting listeners, 'Your ministers preach differently from ours!' The church at Sagradovka has in truth had prophets, wise men and scribes (Matthew 23, 24). The memory of these men remains a blessing for many. Many poor sinners have been revived to a new life by them. The old brother Johann Kroeker [see above *#51* 'Brudertal'] belongs to the most energetic and best known among them, who at one time was also spiritual advisor on the Raxin forestry camps station. He was a champion, a fiery Peter at times! He also had been a teacher and had read much. He belonged to the most educated of his contemporaries.

"An important revival took place in the years 1885-1886. It was also at this time that a number of the ministers mentioned energetically urged the abolition of many abuses in the church and also urged the adoption of Scriptural church practices. They were also intent upon meeting the normal needs of the converts and sought to give them instruction and care through Bible study, prayer meetings, evening services, and Sunday afternoon meetings. House visitations were also made. However, because the far greater part of the church showed an open opposition to definite spiritual life, even the most sincere attempts at reform by individual ministers did not achieve the desired goals, and the consequences were that most of the members who had been revived and converted to new life left and joined the M.B. Church. And preachers who were known to be friends of the revival movement were accused of being agitators in the church and were to blame that so much disturbance had been caused by their excessive activity. I heard an old man say, 'That comes as a result of house visitations. If people had been left alone, they would not leave the church now!'

"Missionary interest also was especially aroused by some of the ministers mentioned. For example, the deceased Minister Johann Martens, with several others founded a service society in Ohrloff, which made various articles and then sold these at auction. Today such societies and serving circles are quite common. At that time, in the beginning of the 1880s, they were given various nicknames. Yet God has blessed the seemingly insignificant work, and through it thousands of rubles have flowed into missions."

Thus far our good reporter. Concerning the difficulties with regard to the church building in the 1890s, see above *#250.* A very important period began for this church with the work of its third elder, Franz Martens. We find the movement, which now began and ended in 1907 with a separation, described in detail below in the history of the origin of the "Altonau Evangelical Mennonite Church at Sagradovka."

Elders, ministers and deacons of the Nikolaifeld-Sagradovka Church: Elder Wilhelm Voth (f.), minister, '72, elder, June 2, 1874-95, retired; Gerhard Warkentin, minister, '73, elder, '95-, died '02; Franz Martens (was t., is f., chairman of the school board), minister, '94, elder, '02-07 (with others, formed the Altonau Evangelical Mennonite Church); Johann Voth (son of the above, f., member of the school board), minister, '07, elder, June 1, 1908-. Ministers: Peter Bergen, '72; Wilhelm Sudermann, '73; Johann Kroeker, '73; Johann Martens (see above, "Ohrloff-Halbstadt"), '75; Abram Woelk, '75; Abram Friesen, '75; Jakob Neufeld, '78; Bernhard Wiens (see above, "Ohrloff II"), '80; Heinrich Reimer (see above, "Ohrloff-Neukirch"), '84- -?- Johann Warkentin (f., with Elder Martens, formed the Altonau Evangelical Mennonite Church), '87-07; Franz Buller (sse, was t.) ? - ? Isaak Braun, '87; Franz Bahnmann (f., see "Altonau"), '94-07; Kornelius Janzen (see above, "Karassan," sst., Spat), 1900; Peter Martens (f., see "Altonau"), 1900-07; Jakob Janzen (f., see "Altonau"), 1900-07; Peter Bergen, 1900; Gerhard Wiebe (sse., was t., is f., see "Altonau"), '02-07; Johann Penner (f., see "Altonau"), '03-07; Johann Doerksen, Novonikolaievka (f.), '03-?; Abram Friesen, Molodievka (f.), '04?; Gerhard Isaak, Novonikolaievka (f.), '05-?; Franz Klassen (f., see "Altonau"), '04-07; Heinrich Koehn (f., see "Altonau"), '04-07; Isbrand Wiebe (f., see "Altonau"), '06-07; Jakob Wiens (f., see "Altonau"), '06-07; Wilhelm Woelk (f.), '97-; Heinrich Plett (was t., is f.), '02-; Jakob Friesen (f.), '06-; Heinrich Penner (was t., is f.), '07-; Jakob Voth (f.), '06-; Heinrich Penner (was t., is f.), '07-; Jakob Voth (f.), '07-; Jakob Pankratz (f.), '07-; Peter Wiebe (f.), '09-; Abram Walde (f.), '09-. Deacons: Johann Defehr, '78; Gerhard Bargen, '79-; Abram Klassen, '93; Peter Bargen, '05-07 (see "Altonau"); Abram Reimer '07-.

Branch churches: a) Durlino-Alexandrovka, Kherson District: Minister Abram Bernhard Reimer (f.), '08-; Volodievka-Trubetzkoie, Kherson District: Minister Aron Rempel (f.), '09-.

III. The congregation at Kalinovo, Memrik, District of Bachmut, Province of Ekaterinoslav, from 1885 to December 1910.

Post Office Shelannoie, Province of Ekaterinoslav.

We can also give an instructive and interesting account of the origin of this church as a new growth, due to settlements by people who left the mother colony. Our report is taken from *Die Memriker Ansiedlung*, by D. H. Epp,[12] and is given with the author's kind permission. The description of the two new settlements Sagradovka and Memrik, in the course of their ecclesiastical development, will give us essentially a true picture of all Chortitza and Molotschna daughter churches. (Compare above *##235, 252, 253* and *254:* "M.B. Churches in New Settlements.") On page 42 in the indicated work we read (in abbreviated form):

"The Memrik-Kalinova Mennonite Church"

". . . The new settlers, though of one origin and one community, had still moved together from various villages of the Molotschna and its branch settlements, and they also had brought with them the most divergent views and all possible differences of opinion with regard to economic and ecclesiastical organization. To unite all this into one great harmony was no easy task, especially when ecclesiastical and religious questions were involved. Unfortunately even the best Christians are often the most intolerant people in this matter. Out of this arise dissatisfactions and quarrels which are as foreign to the true nature of Christianity as that cold indifference which has no religious and ecclesiastical questions at all. Memrik was no exception, and this worked depressingly upon the seriously thinking people of the settlement.

"It was undoubtedly because of failure on the part of the initial leadership that the ecclesiastical needs of the new church were not settled as had been done with the needs of the civic community. . . .

"Great poverty so easily causes a person to become discouraged and vexed, physical work from early to late dulls him and causes him to become unreceptive to spiritual and intellectual influences; and the apparent failure in his first great effort inclines him to be still more peevish, dissatisfied and envious, especially when he sees that others live under better conditions or have an easier life. Here, too then, lack of charity and quarrelsomeness flourished and threatened to choke the better sentiments for a long time. How much needed was a comforting, encouraging, and instructive word of a true spiritual advisor, and how much strife it at times could have prevented! And if death struck a

family, as often happened among the settlers because of raging dysentry at the time, and the deceased was to be buried according to Christian custom, there again was no clergyman to carry out this duty. Fortunately the M.B. Church which had settled in the village of Kotliarevka had brought with it two ministers, Isaak Fast [see *#252*] and Jakob Doerksen, who had to help out in such cases. This they always did without reluctance. Yet these conditions were untenable in the long run and were the more destructive in effect the longer they persisted.

"Only in the fall of the year of settlement [1885] did the two elders, Jakob Toews from Lichtenau and Dietrich Barg from Pordenau come to Memrik in order to regulate the church affairs and to provide the new church with shepherds and teachers.

"The brethren were invited to a meeting for August 27 in the village of Memrik. The very first large meeting took place in a large, empty, partially completed house of a nobleman called Manege, and it was immediately agreed that four ministers and one deacon would be elected.

"After an introductory hymn and fervent prayer that God might show the electors those men whom He had destined for His service, they proceeded to the election. . . . Elected as ministers were: Jakob Wiens, Peter Janzen, Abram Warkentin, and Daniel Schmidt, and as deacon, Johann Janz.

"Those elected, however, did not consent to an immediate installation, but there was not one among the newly elected who had the courage to refuse the position outright or who did not see the will of God in the call.

"So the ordination for service was postponed for the time being; yet the congregation left with the exalted feeling that they again had among them men who were preparing themselves for the pastoral vocation. [The ordination took place after one month]. . . .

"This time it was again the old Elder Jakob Toews from Lichtenau who visited the colony in order, with God's help, to complete the work begun in August. . . . The ordination took place on September 29, 1885. . . . From all the villages people came in large numbers to be witnesses of the sacred ceremony. The keynote of the hearts was in harmony with nature: laughing sunshine, quiet peace! Thus a bride feels on her wedding day, when adorned she goes to meet her bridegroom. . . .

"How mightily the closing hymn of gratitude rang through the room! There was more than high enthusiasm for the good, lofty, and beautiful; there was the fire of the Spirit of God itself, which again and again flows into the hearts which open themselves to it. . . .

"Thus four of the elected, the ministers, Wiens, Janzen, Schmidt and deacon Janz, were installed, while Warkentin was installed in the spring of 1886. Because the three young ministers had no actual instruction in leading a church, they asked Elder Toews to give them advice and instruction. At the last intimate discussions with the elder, he took the Bible, which he just had in his hand, laid it on the table before the young brethren and said, 'Here, dear brethren, here in this book are contained all the regulations of God for a Christian church discipline. Seek and search in this book, and you will in all cases find instruction and advice for the office of a minister and for correct church leadership!' Though this advice seemed short and original and simple to the young ministers at that moment, they could not contest its accuracy, and its usefulness they have tested countless times afterwards.

"At the beginning the exercise of the office proved to be difficult, indeed very difficult, for the young ministers. Even the meetings for worship service, which were held in private homes because of a lack of school rooms, could not be arranged without difficulty. Each time they had to look for a suitable room; and there were very few such rooms available; and then the required seats, etc. However, arrangments could always be made and there were always the required rooms. When in early fall the first schools were arranged for in private homes, people met in school rooms for worship services also, which had now found a permanent place. This contributed much to a regular sequence of services and to active attendance. And God's blessing was not wanting: whatever was obstinate and stiff at first, finally gave in; those who lived as strangers beside each other became better acquainted and more intimate; and so the members of the church became more and more united, not only outwardly but also inwardly. The closer this bond became, the more the heart's desire of many to have a church building become active. And although one can worship God everywhere in spirit and in truth, no matter whether in a particular meeting house or in a school or in a private house, the Christian desires a special place which is specifically dedicated to a common worship where the entire setting indicates the purpose of the meeting, where the entering of the same shall cause the heart to feel 'This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!'

"In Memrik this wish was soon fulfilled. [One of the houses of a nobleman was bought and made to serve the purpose temporarily]. . . .

"In 1886 Warkentin was installed into the ministry, and Minister Jakob Wiens was made head of the other ministers; and thus the church could be regarded as 'organized,' at least outwardly. But also inwardly ministers and congregation grew together more and more. The great poverty caused the spiritual advisors to make frequent house visitations

in order to inquire not only about the spiritual needs but also about the physcial and pecuniary conditions. This gave occasion to comfort the many distressed and to encourage the despondent; and also to help directly by drawing the attention of those who could still help to the extreme need of the destitute and by inducing them to help or to seek help for them in the mother churches. . . .

"It hardly needs to be mentioned that under such conditions many other matters in the inner and outer life of the church were settled which otherwise could possibly have given occasion for misunderstanding. Indeed, had the settlers from the beginning been rich and well-to-do, who knows whether complacency, arrogance, and intolerance would not have arisen with sad consequences and produced sad results. But in this situation one could correctly grasp the fact that every good and perfect gift must come from above. Thus grass did not grow on the path from neighbor to neighbor, for each had so much to lament about and to say to the other—but also to help.

"At Pentecost, 1887, the church experienced a heavy sorrow: the leading minister, Jakob Wiens, who already for some time had been inclined towards the M.B. Church, now joined it formally through baptism by immersion and left his first post, which he had regarded as one assigned by the Lord. [Jakob Wiens is at present elder of the M.B. Church in Siberia.] Because of the harsher attitude which the old and the new churches took towards each other at that time, this withdrawal occasioned much dissatisfaction, which may not always have manifested itself in a truly Christian, tolerant manner; but it also weighed upon the hearts of all thinking persons. However, it was possible to overcome this matter without disrupting the order of the church to lapsing into a continuing strife with the sister church. Here, too, the saying became true, 'And though it appears to destroy, it is not unto death.'

"Upon the wish of the congregation, Minister Peter Janzen took over the main leadership, and above all, the Chief Shepherd Himself took charge of His flock. . . . The mother church, too, has cared for her distant daughter in a true, motherly manner. Especially the Elders Kornelius Dirks from Waldheim, Johan Schartner from Alexanderwohl, and Abram Goerz from Ohrloff visited Memrik from now on and by word and deed strengthened the congregation as well as its ministers. . . .

"As the Memrik Mennonite Church in time developed more and more and also became stronger financially, the desire to become independent in church matters gradually became stronger and stronger; and since in the meantime at occasional visits of the elders for baptism and the Lord's Supper more ministers had been called, namely, Johann Dueck, Jakob Baerg, Dietrich Peters, and Franz Janzen in 1887, it was

finally decided to elect an elder from among the seven officiating ministers.

"On June 23, 1888, this election of the elder took place under the leadership of Elder Abram Goerz from Ohrloff. Peter Janzen, who had been the leading minister up to this time, was elected by a large majority. Already on June 28 the solemn ordination was carried out by Elder Goerz. That was a great, solemn, and blessed day for the church, a day that will stand out for all time in the history of the Memrik Colony, No longer a minor, dependent upon the leading hand of a mother, but independent in church matters, the church could now develop freely.

"The ordination sermon which Elder Goerz preached was stirring, and the act of consecration was overwhelming for all. With close attention all listened to the inaugural address of the young Elder Janzen, who placed himself, his co-workers, and the congregation fully into the hand of God to whom alone he looked for grace, and who alone must be and remain the guide and lode star in all undertakings.

"And God has given grace for the work of His servants. Soon after Elder Janzen assumed his new office, Abram Warkentin was appointed as assistant upon the special request of Elder Janzen. . . ." (Thus far D. H. Epp.)

Great difficulties had to be overcome before an appropriate church building could be acquired—difficulties which remind one of those described in *#250* with regard to the matter of a church building of the congregations at Sagradovka. (See also *#252* "M.B. Church Kotliarevka, Memrik".) Yet God helped here also through the difficulties. The temporary church building was not finally sealed in this case. D. H. Epp continues:

". . . On September 11, 1897, the church had the official permission [for a suitable new building in Kalinovo] in its hands. The building was begun in the spring of 1898. This matter lay very close to the heart of the congregation and in its realization the congregation manifested an almost unparalleled unity and fervor [as well as a readiness to make sacrifices]. . . . The money was collected partly through voluntary contributions by the congregation itself and partly through collections in the mother churches. . . . [After the completion of the church building there still remained a surplus of 84 rubles and 75.5 kopeks in the building fund]. . . .

"The dedication of the church took place on October 25, 1898. . . . Many elders and ministers of the mother churches and sister churches were present. . . .

"Thus the Memrik-Kalinovo congregation had its own officially confirmed church building in which it has ever since held its worship

services undisturbed and uncontested. All vexations of the beginning had been fortunately and conclusively overcome. . . ." (The report in the quoted book closes with the words of Elder P. Janzen). . . . "Lord God, we are not worthy of all the mercy, goodness, love, and grace which Thou hast so richly bestowed upon us in the course of this time! [25 years.] That He has helped thus far assures us that He will continue to help, for He does not forsake the work He has begun. May He continue to bless the church with the power of His Spirit and cause it to grow to full manhood in Christ! May God grant it!"

Elder, ministers and deacons of the Kalinovo-Memrik Church: Elder Peter Janzen (sse, was t., is f.) minister, '85, elder, June 28, 1888-. Ministers: Jakob Wiens,[13] '85-87 (joined the M.B. Church); Abram Warkentin, co-elder, '85-86-; Daniel Schmidt, '85-93 (emigrated to America); Johann Dueck, '87-; Jakob Baerg, '87-; Dietrich Peters, '87-(d. 1899); Franz Janzen, '87-89 (withdrew from the church, where?); Jakob Penner, '93-; Johann Pankratz, 1900-; Peter Dueck, ?-? (withdrew from the church, where ?); Dietrich Voth, '04-? (moved to the Province of Samara); Jakob Epp, '04-? (moved to the Province of Samara); Jakob Martens (f.), '10-; Bernhard Harder (sse, is f.), '19-. Deacons: Johann Janz, '85; Peter Regehr ? - ?; Abram Ediger ?-?-.

IV. The Pleschanovo congregation, "Neusamara," District of Busuluk, Province of Samara, from 1890 to 1910.

Post Office Pleschanovo, Province of Samara.

Elder, ministers and deacons: Elder Daniel Boschmann,[14] minister, '93, elder, '04-. Ministers: Johann Isaak, '76-; Peter Stobbe, '90-; Heinrich Peters, '98-; David Warkentin, '98-; Heinrich Unruh, '98-; Johann Braun, '98-; Johann Warkentin (formerly Petershagen, was forestry camps minister), '99-?-. Deacons: Peter Fast, '95-; Jakob Lorenz, '95-?-.

The church building is in Pleschanovo.

V. The "Nikolaiev" (Molotschna-Orenburg) Church, District and Province of Orenburg, from 1898 (?) to December 1910.

Post Office Dieievka, Province of Orenburg.

Elder, ministers and deacons: Elder Johann Bergmann, minister, '98 elder, '04-. Ministers: Peter Dueck, '98-; David Littke, '99-; Heinrich Janzen, Jr., '02-. Deacon: -?-.

The church building is in Stepanovka.

VI. The "Ufim" congregation, District of Belebei, Province of Ufa, from 1894 (?) to December 1910.

Post Office Davlekanovo, Province of Ufa.

Ministers: Gerhard Dueck, leader, '02-; Peter Heidebrecht, '02-; Jakob Gerbrand (see above "Pordenau" and further "Siberia")-; Franz Martens, '09-; Peter Fast, '09-. Deacon: Johann Rogalsky, '99 -?-.

The church building is at the station Davlekanovo.

VII. The Alexandrodar-Wohldemfurest Mennonite Church, District of Batalpaschinsk, Kuban Territory, from 1885 to December 1910.

Post Office Velikokniasheskoie, Kuban Territory.

Elder, ministers and deacons: Elder Kornelius Dirks (was t., is f., see above "Waldheim")-. Ministers: David J. Claassen, '85 (joined the M.B. Church, see "Felsental"); Jakob Huebert, '91-; David Dirks, '91 -?-. Deacon: Abram Braun -?-.

The church building is in Alexandrodar.

VIII. The Samoilovka congregation, Province of Kharkov, from 1888 to December 1910.

Post Office Bachmetievka, Province of Kharkov.

Office of elder vacant since 1890. Ministers: Johann Driedger, leader (was t., is f., member of school board, '92-; Johann Braun (see above "Lichtenau-Petershagen") in Samoilovka since '88-; Hermann Enns (see above "Petershagen") in Samoilovka since '88 -?-. Deacon: Johann Klassen, '89 -?-.

IX. The Nikolaifeld Mennonite Church at the station Suvorovka, Province of Stavropol, from 1897 (?) to December 1910.

Post Office Tempelhof, Province of Stavropol.

Ministers: Kornelius Harder (spiritual director of schools), '97-; Jakob Enns (spiritual director of schools), '97 -?-. Deacon: Jakob Janzen, '01 -?-.

X. The Mennonite congregation "at the Terek," District of Chassav-Jurt, Terek Territory, from 1901 to December 1910.

Post Office Chassav-Jurt, Terek Territory.

Elder, ministers and deacons: Elder Franz Enns, minister, '03, elder since -?-. Ministers: Dietrich Doerksen, '91-; Kornelius Fast (see above "Neukirch"); Dietrich Klaassen, '91-; Johann Dueck, '02-; Heinrich Regehr, '04-; Jakob Friesen, '04-; Heinrich Balzer, '05-; Bernhard Fast (sse, was t., forestry camps minister), '05 (?) -?-. Deacon: Gerhard Enns, '02 -?-.

The church building is in Chartsch.

XI. The Siberian Mennonite congregation from 1900 (?) to December 1910. (Reports highly incomplete.)

a) "At Omsk," District of Akmolinsk. Post Office Omsk. Minister: Bernhard Fast (formerly "Schoensee" was t., forestry camps minister, is f.), '80 -?-.

b) "Steinfeld," District of Pavlodar, Semipalatinsk Territory. Post Office Pavlodar, Semipalatinsk Territory. Elder: Johannes Kroeker (formerly missionary in India; see above "Gnadenfeld"), itinerant minister for the churches in Siberia -?-.

c) "Barnaul," District of Barnaul, Province of Tomsk. Post Office Karasuk, Province of Tomsk. Elder: Jakob Gerbrandt (see above "Pordenau"), itinerant minister for the churches in Siberia -?-.

d) "Gliaden" (Klein-Barnaul), Lenikovskaia Volost, Utschastok Gliaden, Province of Tomsk. Post Office: Kameni, Province of Tomsk. Ministers: David Harder (sse, is t.), '09-; Salomon Boldt-; Jakob Boldt-; Heinrich Warkentin -?-.

C. Mennonite Churches, immigrated, independent of the Chortitza and Molotschna Churches §418

I. Mennonite Church in Russian Poland and Volhynia.

A. Historical: In the *Namenverzeichnis der . . . Mennoniten-Gemeinden, etc., Danzig, 1857* (Index of names of the . . . Mennonite Churches at Danzig, 1857) we find the following information: In the Kingdom of Poland: a) Congregation at Deutsch-Wymyschle[15] at Gombin and Soda, District of Gostnin. Elder Peter Buller, minister 1836, elder, '38. Teachers (Ministers): Peter Schmidt, '36; Peter Frey, '36; Cornelius Schroeder. Deacons: Bernhard Foth, '41; Ewert. b) Congregation at Kasan near Warsaw. Elder Johann Bartel, minister, '32, elder, '33. Teachers: Gerhard Nickel, '28; Heinrich Nickel, '32; Franz Bartel, '33; Cornelius Schroeder, '41. c) Newly settled congregation Vola-Orscynska near Plonsky in the Plotzk "Government District" (!) Elder-. Teachers: Jacob Koethler, '42; Heinrich Kliewer, '42; Peter Froms, '52. Deacons: Heinrich Kerber, '42; Heinrich Kliewer, '42. d) At Maknovka in the Province of Kiev, church at Deutsch-Michalin. Elder Johann Schroeder, minister, '48, elder, '52. e) In Volhynia near Ostrog at Karolswalde, Karolsberg and Jadvoninne, to which also Antonofka and Dosidorf belong. Elder Tobias Unruh, minister and elder, '53. Teachers: Peter Unruh, '20; Heinrich Dirks, '32; Peter Unruh, '51; "Johann Schartner, Karolswalde, 1851, April 21;" the present elder from "Alexanderwohl?" Deacons: Andreas Unruh, '27; Peter Unruh, '52. At Antonofka and Dosidorf: Teachers: Samuel Koehn, '52; Heinrich Koehn, '52. From the year 1881 the following date (from *Namensverzeichnis*): a) congregation at Deutsch-Wymyschle near Gombin and Soda, District of Gostnin. Elders: Gerhard Bartel, minister, '55, elder, '69; Jacob Foth, minister,

'74, elder, '75. Teachers: Jakob Schroeder, '66; Peter Kliewer, '75. Deacon: Heinrich Ratzlaff, '62. Membership 150. b) Congregation at Deutsch-Kasun near Warsaw. Elder Heinrich Bartel, minister, '61, elder, '64. Teacher: Gerhard Janz, '76. Deacons: Peter Bartel, '67; David Bartel, '73. c) Branch congregation Vollavodczinsky near Cizechanovo. Teachers: Cornelius Balzer, '80; Julius Balzer, '80; Peter Pauls, '80. Deacon: Heinrich Bartel, '80. Membership of both churches 597. In the *Jahrbuch* [16] *der altevangelischen Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten Gemeinden* (Yearbook of the Old Evangelical Anabaptist or Mennonite Churches). H. G. Mannhardt, minister of the Danzig Mennonite Church, 1888: a) Deutsch-Kasun Church near Warsaw. Year of founding not available, but the church chronicle goes back to 1762. The membership numbers approximately 300; it has been decreased considerably in recent years through emigration. The members are scattered in the Warsaw District . . . and further in the Province of "Sitomir" (Volhynia), in the vicinity of the little town of Pulin. Elder: Heinrich Bartel, '64. Ministers: Gerhard Janz, '74; Peter Vogt, '74. Deacons: Peter Bartel, '67; David Bartel, '75. b) Deutsch-Wymyschle, Province of Warsaw, District of Gostnin, Post Office Gombin; year of founding unknown; the congregation has 125 members and 84 children; it consists of two parts, one of which practices foot washing at the Lord's Supper; the church is jointly owned, built in 1864; each part of the church has its elder: Jakob Foth, elder of the church that practices foot washing, '75; Elder Johann Kliewer, '85. Teachers for the whole congregation: Jakob Schroeder, '66; Peter Kliewer, '75; Peter Ratzlaff (now elder of the M.B. Church?), '84.

B. The Polish-Volhynia congregations in the present: 1905-10.[17]

a) The Deutsch-Kazun congregation, District and Province of Warsaw. Post Office Novy Dvor, Province of Warsaw.

Elder Peter Tgahrt; Ministers: Peter Vogt, Gerhard Nickel, Peter Schroeder -?-. Deacon Peter Bartel -?-.

b) The Lileva congregation (Branch of the Alexanderwohl congregation, Molotschna), District of Ostrog, Province of Volhynia. Post Office Ostrog-Volinsky.

Ministers: Johann Jantz, Johann Nachtigall -?-. Deacon: Johann Deckert -?-.

c) The Deutsch-Wymyschle Church, District of Gostnin, Province of Warsaw. Post Office Gombin, Province of Warsaw.

Elder: Johann Schmidt, minister, '94, elder, '96. Minister: Peter Kliewer, '75 -?-. Deacon: Heinrich Unruh, '94 -?-.

II. The Churches who have emigrated directly from Prussia to the Province of Samara and Russian Turkestan.

1) The Koeppental-Ohrloff congregation, Malyschinskaia Volost, District of Novousensk, from 1853 to 1910.[18]

Post Office Koeppental, Province of Samara.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: Johann Wall (see above *#61,2*), minister still in Prussia, elected as elder by the settler church on the way in Ohrloff, Molotschna, and ordained in the Ohrloff Church by Elder Bernhard Fast 1853; David Hamm, minister, '53 (elected by the settler church in Ohrloff), elder, '58-84- (d. ?); honorary elder Johann Toews, minister, '32 (in Prussia), elder (in the same place), '53; Johann Quiering (has tutorial teacher diploma for the Russian language, was secondary school teacher, is f.), minister, '81, elder, '84-. Ministers: Cornelius Froese, '47 (in Prussia); Johann Johann Epp, '59; Isaak Epp, '61; Johannes Janzen, '75; Aron Wiebe, '81; Peter Wiens, '81-; Peter Bergmann, '85-; Hermann Neufeld, '85-; Jakob Bergmann, '93-; Johann Toews, '93-; Heinrich Neufeld, '96-?-; Jakob Quiering (son of the elder, graduate of the institute on the Weierhof, Pfalz, Bavaria and of the Evangelical Seminary in Basel, was itinerant minister of the General Conference, now in America), '96 (?). Deacons: Dietrich Klassen, '64-; David Froese, '76-; Peter Wall, '96-; Johann Siebert, '96-?-.

2) The Alexandertal congregation ("Altsamara"), District and Province of Samara, from 1861 to Dec. 1910.

Post Office Koschki, Province of Samara.

Elders, ministers and deacons: Elders: First elder ? - ?; Johann Wiebe, minister, '73, elder, '74--97 (see "M.B. Church Mariental"); Jakob Regehr, minister, '96, elder, '97-. Ministers: Johann Sukau, '32 (in Prussia); Cornelius Klaassen, '38 (in Prussia); Heinrich Ewert (see above "M.B. Church in Mariental"), '51 (in Prussia); Gerhard Enss, '61; Johann Isaak, '67; Jakob Toews, '79; Jakob Epp (see above "M.B. Church in Mariental"), '83; Dietrich Hamm, '83-; Jakob Hein, '96-; Kornelius Hamm, '99-; Gerhard Thiessen, '03-; Jakob Toews, '05-? Deacons: Franz Wall, '51 (in Prussia); Bernhard Matthies, '61; Peter Toews; Bernhard Matthies, '05-?

The church building is in Alexandertal.

3) The Romanovka congregation in Russian Turkestan, District of Aulie-Ata, Syrdarinsk Territory, from 1884 to December 1910.

Post Office Aulie-Ata, Syrdarinsk Territory.

Elder, ministers and deacons: Elder: Johann Regehr, minister, '78, elder, '84-. Ministers: Hermann Epp, '84-; Franz Abrams, '94-; Gerhard Kopper, '95-; Hermann Wall, '95-?. Deacon: Kornelius Wall, '95-?.

The church building is in Romanovka. (A small congregation also exists in Chiva.)

Note. This church moved as "Exodus Church" to Central Asia in 1880 from both "Volga" churches: Koeppental and Alexandertal, not, as stated above, only from Koeppental. See above "M.B. Church in Turkestan," *#258.*

NB! Upon our inquiry an authoritative source has given us the following short note for a printed report on the Mennonites in Kurland: "In the Province of Kurland there is also a Mennonite congregation whose scattered members, living in various districts and volosts, have organized themselves with the permission of the secular government, into an independent church with its own spiritual directorship and ministers. The elder and minister of this church is called Johann Wollberg [Post Office Tsabeln, Province of Kurland, town Lani]. He has officiated since the year 1902. Ten families with 61 persons, among them 38 liable for taxation, belong to the church."

§419 D. The Clergy of the M.B. Churches in December 1910

Because almost all of the M.B. churches have been treated historically above and their clergy has been given, we shall here give only the constituent names as they apply today and only of the older churches; in regard to the others we refer to *## 240-258.*

1) The Rueckenau-Molotschna M.B. Church. (See above *##240-242.*)

Elder David Schellenberg, who withdrew in 1909 (see above *#240, 3*). "At the church meeting which took place on June 20, 1909 the leadership of the church was transferred without dissentient voice to the collective directorate by the Molotschna M.B. Church on the basis of Holy Scriptures (Acts 15:22; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 5:17ff.; Titus 1:5; I Peter 5:1; James 5:14)."[19] As temporary plenipotentiaries for external matters of the collective Molotschna M.B. churches[20] the following ministers have been appointed: Abram Friesen, Rueckenau (see above *#310,* "Missions to the Heathen"); Heinrich Jakob Braun, Neu-Halbstadt (was t., graduate of the Hamburg Seminary, is landed estate owner, director of "Raduga" Company) and Peter Penner, Rueckenau (sse, was t., is secretary of the church). Further ministers: Wilhelm Loewen, Alexanderkrone (f.)-; Jakob Reimer, Rueckenau (sse, was t., is itinerant minister)-; Jakob Friesen, Rueckenau (auditor of the Hamburg Seminary, landed estate owner)-; Heinrich Reimer, Rueckenau (f.)-; Isaak Regehr, Alexandertal (sse, sst)-; Peter Unruh, Ohrloff (see above "Ohrloff Church"; sse, was t., graduate of St. Chrischona, member of school board, is landed estate owner)-; Jakob Kroeker (was t., graduate of Hamburg Seminary, see above "Publications," at present in a foreign country).; Abram Kroeker, Neu-Halbstadt (was t., see above "Publications")-; David Isaak, Neu-Halbstadt (was t., is book seller); Peter

Bergmann, Ladekopp (f., see above "Ohrloff-Halbstadt Church")-; Peter Regehr, Margenau (f.)-; Adolf Reimer, Blumenort (sse, was t., is itinerant minister)-; Isaak Koop, Waldheim (f.)-; Abram Enns, Waldheim (f.)-; David Goerzen, Waldheim (f.)-; Kornelius Klassen, Waldheim (sse, was t., is f.)-; Klaas Enns, Conteniusfeld (f.)-; Heinrich Koehn, Pordenau (f.)-; Johann Sudermann, Alexandertal (f.)-; Kornelius Boschmann, Hierschau (f.)-; Abram Peters, Taschtschenack (sse, is t.)-. Division [21] Herzenberg- Alexandrovka (see above *#242, 3*): Minister David Wiens (f.). Candidates for the office of minister: Benjamin Unruh Lic. Th. (see above "Halbstadt Business School")-; Benjamin Janz, Tiege (sse, is t.)-; Philip Cornies, Rosenort (sse, is t.)-; Heinrich Dueck, Gnadenheim (f.)-; Johann Penner (sse, was t., auditor at University of Leipzig—see above "Chortitza Secondary School")-; Heinrich Goossen, Alexandertal (sse, was t., is f.)-. Ordained deacons: Gerhard Martens, Rueckenau-; Gerhard Braun, Alexanderkrone-; Johann Huebert, Muensterberg-; Peter Boese, Tiegenhagen-; Isaak Neufeld, Waldheim-.

2) The Einlage M.B. Church with Branches Nikolaipol (Jasykovo), Andreasfeld and Wiesenfeld. (See above *##243, 244*).

Elder in retirement Aron Lepp, minister, '66, elder, '80-; functioning elder, Gerhard Regehr, Jasykovo (sse, was t., is f.), minister, '95, elder, '03-; co-elder, Martin Koslowsky, Jasykovo (f.), '83-. Ministers: Peter Toews, Jasykovo (f.), '94-; Johann Peters, Jasykovo (f.), '94-; Johann Schellenberg (sse, was t., is f.), '03-; Jakob Koslowsky, Einlage (business man), '06-; Kornelius Pauls (f.), '05-; Abram Neufeld (f.), '05-; Cornelius Reimer, Wiesenfeld-Gnadenfeld (sse, was t., see above "Gnadenfeld School for Girls"), '04-; Jakob Janzen, Grossfuerstenland, Sergeievka (factory owner), '93-; Dietrich Wiebe, Grossfuerstenland (f.), '08-; Johann Enns, Grossfuerstenland (f.), '08-. Candidates for the office of minister: Johann Pauls, Kornelius Neufeld, Peter Niebuhr, Wilhelm Janzen, Heinrich Block, Abram Quiering, Johann Pauls-. Deacons: Klaas Wiebe-; Kornelius Pauls-; Peter Teichreb, '93-. Jakob Janzen, '10-. (Concerning branches, see above *#244*.)

2a) The Petrovka-Naumenko M.B. Church—see above *#244, 6*.

3) The Kuban M.B. Church (see above *#245-248*).

Elder in retirement Daniel Fast (see above)-; functioning elder, Kornelius Wiens (sse, was t., is f.), minister, '95, elder, '05-. Ministers: Johann Fast (sse, is f.), '95-; Johann Duerksen (sse, is t.) ordained at the Terek, '07, at the Kuban since '08-; David Claassen, mentioned above, now at Felsental-. Deacons: Johann Toews, '02-; Gerhard Friesen (formerly area administrator), '07-. (Concerning branch church see above *#248*.)

4) The Friedensfeld-Miropol M.B. Church (see above *#249*).

Elder: Jakob Janz (f.), minister, '65, elder, '75-. Ministers: Heinrich Friesen, Sr. (student at the Ohrloff Society School, f.), '94-. Candidate: Heinrich Friesen, Jr. (sse, is t.)-. Deacon and candidate for the ministry: Peter Funk (f.), '01-. Nepliuievo: Ministers: Heinrich Friesen (f.), '94-; Isaak Toews (f.), '03-. Candidate: Johann Funk (f.), '08-. Deacon: Jakob Dyck, '08-. Hebrew colonies: Minister: Franz Wieler (sse, was t., is f.), '07-. Miloradovka: Ministers: Abram Wall (see above "Spat M.B. Church," was t., is itinerant minister), '78-; Kornelius Janzen (f.), '03-; Kornelius Funk (f.), '07-. Candidate: Gerhard Dyck (f.) -?-. Steinfeld: Minister: Franz Krause (f.), '01-. Deacon: Peter Krause-.

5) The Tiege-Sagradovka M.B. Church (see above *#250*).

Elder representative in retirement: Isaak Regehr (f.), '87-; functioning elder: Johann Nickel (f.), minister, '93, elder, '97-. Ministers: Johann Warkentin (f.), minister, '93, elder, '97-. Ministers: Johann Warkentin (f.), '89-; Wilhelm Dyckmann (f.), '93-; Aron Warkentin (f.), '89-; Franz Regehr (f.), '96-; Jakob Epp (was t., is f., lives in the leasehold colony Novo-Nikolaievka), '94-; Abram Regehr (f.), '08-; Paul Koop (was t., is f.), '96-; Peter Thielmann (since 1911 sst at Davlekanovo; see above) since ?-; Jakob Friesen (sse, was t., is book seller), '08-. Deacons: -?-. (Concerning branch churches see above *#250, 3.*)

6) The Spat-Schoental M.B. Church in the Crimea (see above *#251*).

Elder: David Duerksen (see above "Schools") May 23, '99- (d. July 29, '10); representative elder: Peter Goerzen (f., member of the school Board), minister, '98-. Ministers: Hermann Konrad (f., was church leader for many years, retired because of deafness), '86-; Jakob Huebert, Jr. (f.), '98-; Johann Friesen (f.), '99-; Dietrich Doerksen (f.), '05-; Abram Klaass Kroeker (f.), '05-; Kornelius Wall (f.), '06-; Klaas Boschmann (f.), '10-; Johann Dick (f.), '10-; Johannes Heinrich Dick (sse, Hamburg Seminary, is t.), '10-. Candidates: Johann Voth (f.), '90-; Heinrich Delesky (f.), '04-; Peter Ediger (f.), '04-; Peter Klassen (sse, was teacher, is member of school board, book-seller), '04-; Heinrich Ediger (sse, was t., died 1910); Johann Johann Dick (sse, Hamburg Seminary, is t.)-. Deacons: Jakob Huebert, Sr., '86-; Johann Rahn, '94-; Johann Dick, Sr., '99-. (For other M.B. churches see *##240-258.*)

§420

E. The Evangelical Mennonite Churches Also Known as "Alliance Churches"

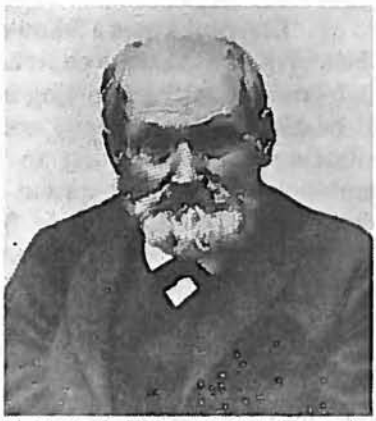
1) The "Molotschna Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood," parish of Lichtfelde, from 1905 to December 1910.

Post Office: Halbstadt, Taurida.

In presenting an account of the origin of this fellowship, we give a copy of the material which was graciously placed at our disposal.



a) Retired Elder Aron Lepp (b. 1829). Elder of the M.B. Church, Einlage, 1876-1903.



b) Retired Elder Daniel Fast (b. 1826). Elder of the M.B. Church, Kuban, 1877-1901.



c) Jakob Jantz (b.1834). Elder of the M.B. Church, Friedensfeld (Miropol) since 1875.



d) David Duerksen (1850-1910). Elder of the M.B. Church, Spat-Schoental, Crimea, 1899-1910.



e) Peter Peter Schmidt of Steinbach (1860-1910). Co-elder of the Molotschna Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood.

a) "In recent years a fellowship was formed in Molotschna, composed of believers from various churches [cf. *#198,* o]. Meeting on specific days, this fellowship gathers to sing spiritual songs, study God's Word, pray, and break bread. Gradually some members of this group came to the realization that, according to the Word of God, they should unite themselves into a congregation. After serious deliberation and prayer, a union came into existence on May 16, 1905[22] in Juschanlee. The new church was called the Molotschna Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood and its formation was reported to the district government of Berdiansk, the Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld, the Mennonite Council of Church Leaders and the elder of the Mennonite Brethren Church. The Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood considers the Holy Scriptures to be its sole guide, according to which the life of the individual and the entire edifice of the church are to be patterned. Ps. 119: 105; John 8:31, 32; Acts 2:42. The motivation for the union of the 'Molotschna Evangelical Brotherhood' was twofold:

"First, there was the understanding drawn from Holy Scripture that members of a church of God must be true believers in Jesus Christ in order to be built up as living stones into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 6:14-18; I Peter 2:5.

"Secondly, there was the desire to have an undivided fellowship with all the children of God who try to live a sanctified life in accordance with Christ's example, the Head of the total church of God, who is intimately united with each member of His church, which is His body, and who does not desire a division within His body, but rather a mutual caring for one another. Gal. 6:16, 16. I Cor. 10:16, 17; Eph. 1:22, 23; I Cor. 12.

"But God, who in His loving decree sent His only begotten Son into this world, for the purpose of dying for the people, and not for the people only, but also to gather together the children of God who are scattered abroad (John 11:52), and to fill the hearts of all His children with His love by the Holy Spirit, so that they would all become 'one heart and soul' to the praise of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has bought us with His blood, to whom be glory in eternity! Amen."

b) Minutes.

"On May 16, 1905, while studying the word of God and after much prayer for guidance from the Holy Spirit, the undersigned brethren resolved in Juschanlee, to declare themselves an independent church on the basis of Holy Scriptures and in keeping with the Mennonite Confession, and the code of laws, article 1104 and 1105, Vol. XI, part 1, 1896 edition. The name of this church shall be: ' Molotschna Evangelical

Mennonite Brotherhood.' This decision shall be reported to Mr. Ispravnik in Berdiansk, and copies sent to the Area Administrative Offices in Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld. Copies of these minutes shall also be sent to the Molotschna Mennonite Council of Church Leaders, and to the executive committee of the United Christian Mennonite Brethren Church, namely, by these dear brethren: Elder Heinrich Unruh of Muntau and Elder David Schellenberg of Rueckenau.[23] (Signed): Elder: Isaak Ediger, Peter Schmidt (deceased, May, 1910), Heinrich Guenter, Minister Abram Nachtigal; Church members: Nikolai Ediger, Peter Enns, Cornelius Klaassen, Jakob Boschmann, Peter Stobbe, Peter Ediger, John Dick, Johann Boldt, Johann Enns, Jakob Dick, Heinrich Harder."

Present elders, ministers, and deacons (December 1910): Heinrich Guenter (sse; estate owner, cf.; above: "Ohrloff Secondary School"); Isaak Ediger (teacher, cf. above: "Halbstadt School for Girls"); Abram Nachtigal (was t., forestry camp minister, itinerant minister); Jakob Loewen (sse., was t., cf. above: "Lichtenau") -?-.

2) The "Altonau Evangelical Mennonite Church at Sagradovka" from 1907 to December 1910.

Address: Tiege, District Kherson.

Franz Martens, the elder of this fellowship, writes the following concerning its origins. (We abbreviate without punctuation and thus accept the responsibility for style):

a) "Already for some years the majority of the ministers of the Nikolaifeld Mennonite Church of Sagradovka [cf. above] shared the understanding and conviction that our Mennonite churches had, in many points, departed from our Confession of Faith (and especially from God's Word), and that there was a need for a serious and thorough reform in respect to the administration of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and evangelical church discipline. Those ministers who longed for spiritual life in the church had for many years already pointed to the abuses and had pressed for reform in order that our church practices would conform with the teaching and confession handed down to us by our forefathers. Everyone who loves truth must admit that this is presently not the case. This is also the reason why those dear ministers, who love to preach the Gospel with their whole heart, come into conflict with their consciences whenever it comes to the most solemn of church practices, such as baptism, communion, excommunication and acceptance into church membership. I was deeply hurt after my election to the office as elder [congregation at Nikolaifeld, Sagradovka], when I noticed that my best co-workers in the Word felt very sorry for me in my position as elder. And this condition will prevail as long as our churches will not, in

principle, defend a church practice which is in keeping with God's Word and our Confession. Is this not the main reason why in the last forty years most [?] of those who have been awakened to a new life have left the Mennonite churches? Does not the Mennonite Brethren Church in its Confession [1900-02] stress: 'that their organization does not annul the Confession of Faith of other Anabaptist Mennonites in Russia, but that they protest against the church practices of these churches?' All preaching and writing against 'separation' will remain fruitless since the Bible, under certain circumstances, commands separation (2 Cor. 6:14ff. etc.).

"The fault, that our congregations have reached their present condition, does not lie only with the present generation; however, it is everyone's duty, and especially that of the elder, to discern and obey what the Lord says to the churches. From my point of view, it was both timely and appropriate, that a brother challenged all the spiritual leaders of the Mennonite churches in 1905 at the General Conference at Memrik, with a sermon that reviewed Christ's message to the church at Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6), to consider the question: 'What must happen in order to bring about change in our churches?'

"When this writer entered the office as elder (June 30, 1902), the members of the Nikolaifeld Mennonite Church council agreed that in the future they would work, according to their ability as God would grant, towards the practice of believer's baptism, the Lord's Supper for believers, and biblical church discipline, as our reformer Menno Simons taught. Consequently, the church was constantly encouraged to this end, and asked to cooperate. Prior to my first baptismal act in 1903 I asked for permission from the total brotherhood to allow me to make a distinction between baptismal candidates, and at the same time to consent that baptism need not be administered only on one day, i.e., always only at Pentecost. As could be expected, this request caused much agitation and discontent. The elder and the ministers were accused of being overly stern, of a lack of love, being arrogant, and many other similar things. It is obvious that under these circumstances it became impossible to achieve the desired goals, or to avoid mistakes. During a period of more than four years the Council of Church Leaders at Nikolaifeld became convinced that by and large, and inspite of their apostolic confession, our churches were not, in principle, in favor of an apostolic, ecclesiastical practice of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and church discipline: for while the ministers were forced to admit, with a deep sense of shame and sorrow, that they had often dealt laxly, the vast majority of the church unconditionally demanded greater latitude.

"After periodically praying and conferring with my dear co-workers about this matter, we held a brotherhood meeting on February 7, 1907,

where we declared that, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (I Cor. 4:1), we were bound in our conscience to the Word of God and our Confession of Faith, and thus could not practice baptism, the Lord's Supper, and church discipline, as was demanded by the majority. The brotherhood meeting of February 7, however, ended without having reached a conclusion. Since most of my co-workers had declared themselves to be in agreement with me, a written declaration was requested by the retired Elder W. Voth to see whether they, as ministers, would declare themselves willing to accept the elder's office. Their answer to this question was as follows:

"February 27, 1907. We, the undersigned, herewith report that we do not have the joy to accept the leadership of the church, since we are bound in our conscience to the Word of God and our Confession of Faith. However, we do not wish to be understood to say that we herewith also renounce the preaching of the Gospel. Signed: Isaak Braun, Johann Warkentin, Franz Bahnman, Peter Martens, Franz Klassen, Heinrich Koehn, Jakob Friesen, Isbrand Wiebe, Johann Penner, Jakob Janzen, Gerhard Wiebe, Abraham Klassen and Peter Bergen. (The last two are deacons.)

"I sent the above declaration of the brethren to the old Elder W. Voth, with an explanatory letter:

"Dearly beloved elder! A greeting of love to you! I herewith send you the desired explanation of my dear co-workers with their own signatures. You will notice that it is not the preaching of the Gospel we are being forced to renounce, but the administration of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and church discipline, as it is being demanded of us. We do not wish to rule over the church, as some interpret our actions, or fight against the church. Thus I see myself forced to resign the leadership, and ask the brotherhood to release me from the administration of the above-mentioned practices, transfering these duties to someone else.

Your humble co-elder,
F. Martens."

"Immediately Elder Voth took the initiative and arranged for a brotherhood meeting on March 3rd, where he presented our declaration. It agreed to my request and transferred the leadership to Minister Heinrich Plett, who was not in agreement with us.

"Hereupon I received a written communication from Elder Voth about the decisions of the brotherhood with the following addition: should I or my co-workers want to remain members of the Nikolaifeld congregation, and also desire to serve as ministers, we would have to

sign a declaration in order to bind ourselves to it. To this we could not agree.

"Through various circumstances, we finally came to the understanding that it was in keeping with God's Word that we should organize ourselves into a congregation, in order that we would not be put into the situation where the cultivation of our fellowship would do injury to the regulations of the Mennonite church at Nikolaifeld. The first meeting of this group was held on April 22. This meeting was occasioned by the repeated request of Elder W. Voth to give him a list of all the families who wanted to establish a new church with us. My answer was as follows: 'Altona, April 21, 1907. Dear Elder W. Voth! In response to your last letter I met with my co-workers on Maundy Thursday for advice. Our determined decision is to defend the practice of believer's baptism, the Lord's Supper for believers, and apostolic church discipline, as taught by Scripture and Menno Simons, and as stressed in our own Confession of Faith. At the same time, it is our heart's desire and prayer to God that He would give us grace, in order that those who differ from us on this matter would not feel grieved by our decision and actions. However, in order to be able to cultivate an unhindered fellowship with all those who are in agreement with us without being put in the position of having to violate the old congregational rules, we have come to the conclusion that, should the Lord lead us to unite into one fellowship, we will not neglect to notify the church and the respective local officials of our decision. We are also ready to preach the Word at banquets, or Sunday worship services, and we are happy to read that you will allow us to do so. The motto we have chosen is found in the words of Matthew 11:29, and I Cor. 13.

Your submissive brother,
F. Martens.'

b) Minutes [abbreviated]

"On May 15, 1907, the undersigned brethren, in Altonau, as they were studying God's Word and praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, decided to declare themselves an independent church, on the basis of God's Word, and in keeping with the Mennonite Confession of Faith, and the Code of Laws, Article 1104 and 1105, Vol. XI, part 1, 1898 edition. The name of this church shall be: 'Altonau Evangelical Mennonite Church.'

"Our decision to take this step shall be reported to Ispravnik in Kherson, and a copy sent to the Area Administrative Office in Tiege. The elders of the following sister churches shall also be notified: the Nikolaifeld Mennonite Church; the Tiege Mennonite Brethren Church; the leading elder of the Molotschna Mennonite Council of Church Leaders and the elders of the Chortitza churches.

"There follow twenty-nine signatures of ministers and with one exception, brethren who are family heads." [Compare the harmless steps leading to the formation of these two churches with *#82-126!!* Tempora mutantur!]

This church, as well as the Lichtfelde "Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood," practices on principle only believer's baptism by immersion, but accepts all believers who are satisfied with their mode of baptism. Some members—even ministers—of this church and that of Lichtfelde, were rebaptized by immersion; however, the majority (at least those from the Altonau Church) have until the present time—December 1910—not been rebaptized.

Elders, ministers, and deacons of the Altonau Evangelical Mennonite Church are: Elder Franz Martens, '07; Minister Johann Warkentin, Franz Bahnmann, Peter Martens, Jakob Janzen, Gerhard Wiebe, Johann Penner, Franz Klassen, Heinrich Koehn, Isbrand Wiebe, Jakob Wiens (all in the Nikolaifeld Church); Peter Riediger (cf. above, "Chortitza Secondary School") evangelist, '07; Deacon Peter Bargen, 1905. The church numbers 275 members; it has one house of worship, presently located in Ohrloff.

F. The "Apostolic Brethren Church" or "Bread Breaker Church" Kirianovka, District Tiukalinsk, District Tobolsk §421

Address: Rasiesd 833, Siberian rail, District Kulikovskaia (origin, see *#126*).

Elder Herman Peters; minister: Kornelius Martens; Nikolas Esau -?-. [24]

G. The Mennonite "Templer Churches" §422
(Origin, see above *#52.*)

1) The Templer Church Olgino, Templehof, District of Stavropol.

Address: Voronzovo-Alexandrovskoie, District of Stavropol.

Elder: Johann Lange (deceased); Johann Schmidt (deceased); Dietrich Dick, N. Gengenbach -?-.

2) The Temple Church Alexandrodar, Velikokniashesk Volost, Kuban area.

Address: Velikokniashesk, Kuban (district).

Elder: Isaak Fast (see above "Ohrloff Secondary School") -?-.

§423 H. Membership

The Mennonite Church numbers between 55-60 congregations; the M.B. Church between 35-40. The number could be much higher if one were to take every meeting place or branch church into consideration. People are not consistent in these matters: congregational statistics are kept differently from place to place, and so the numbers are generally accurate but not precisely so. According to one of our ablest statisticians, it is impossible to give an accurate count of the membership and general attendance in the spiritual congregations of the Mennonite Church: there is a constant withdrawal from (and to a certain extent, return to) these congregations. The largest church is in Chortitza. According to the civilian vital statistics of 1907/08 the count for the Chortitza-Volost (in which the Mennonite Church is the largest) was approximately 15,500 souls. If we subtract the membership of the Kronsweide Church and the Einlage Church from this number, we might conjecture that the Chortitza Church without taking into account its branch churches, at Nikolaipol, etc., numbered about 13,000. According to a number of statistics from previous years, 4/9 of the 13,000 attenders could have been baptized members. According to the above-mentioned sources, the two Molotschna districts, within the same time period, contained approximately 27,000 souls (Halbstadt approximately 15,000 and Gnadenfeld approximately 12,000). The Lichtenau Petershagen Church is the largest in the Molotschna (without its affiliates): in 1905 they reported 4,000 strong. The central churches of both districts are not large: in 1905 they numbered almost 1,200 in Halbstadt, and almost 1,000 in Gnadenfeld. The M.B. churches have approximately 7,000 members and between 16-17,000 adherents. Thus they constitute approximately 1/5 of all Mennonites in Russia. (The membership in relation to the adherents in the M.B. Church is usually 2 out of 5.) The largest M.B. church is found in Rueckenau-Molotschna: on January 1, 1910, it listed its total attendance as a little over 2,600. It is noteworthy that in the new settlements the percentage of the members to those of the Mennonite Church is much greater than in the old settlements. The Apostolic Brotherhood numbers about 50 families and the Templer Church about 80. According to the civilian vital statistics of the past two years, the three oldest districts of Chortitza, Halbstadt, and Gnadenfeld have 7/19 of all Mennonites in Russia (according to the count, all persons 14 to 60 years of age were taxed for the forestry camps). The distribution into geographical groups or "assessment districts" was presented above under "Economic Statistics": *#391-405,* especially *#408;* the total number is given in the footnote to *#406.*

J. Number, Education and Payment of Ministers §424

The number of elders (and "leaders" in churches which have their own elders, whose positions are momentarily vacant) in the Mennonite churches is 32 and in the M.B. churches, 15. The number of ministers (and candidates, of which there are very few in the Mennonite Church, but which constitute 1/4 of all those who preach in the M.B. Church) in the Mennonite Church is 262, while the M.B. Church has 150. (We are convinced that the number of persons we have discovered is considerably less than is actually the case.) Aside from this there are 18 elders and ministers in the new "Evangelical Mennonite Church." Thus, we know of a total of 477 spiritual leaders, ministers and those who preach the Word (to which we need to add that most deacons in the M.B. Church, who are not included in this number, are also assistant ministers). Deacons (we know of) are: 65 in the Mennonite churches, 33 in the M.B. churches. Since we have certainly not traced all the ministers (we do not even have any sure information about all the existing smaller affiliated churches), we can assume, with the certainty that we are still below the true figure, that there are approximately 500 spiritual teachers (excluding deacons and active missionaries). This would mean at least one spiritual teacher to 200 souls (if we take the highest possible count of 100,000 Mennonites in Russia, *#406*).

§425 With regard to education (as far as we know) there are 110 spiritual leaders with an elementary school teacher's training;[25] 40 with a theological (lower or higher) seminary training, and one with a university theological training.[26] Of these, 110 were or are village-school teachers (of which 13 have a theological training, aside from their pedagogical studies), 17 secondary school teachers (or intermediate schools generally; of these 17, there are 12 with a theological education; these 13 village and 12 secondary-school teachers with theological training are already included in the above 40 theologians); and 15 ministers with a secondary school training without pedagogical training or practice (of those we know). Since, naturally, all ascertainable numbers are below the real figures, we could assume (instead of 110 with a pedagogical, and 41 with a theological training): that approximately one-third (about 160-170) of all ordained ministers (roughly 500) have received a theological or pedagogical-theological pre-training. Two-thirds of these, however, are entirely self-taught with an elementary and (not pedagogical) secondary education (the latter constitute about 1 out of every 30). The one-third of the formally trained pedagogical ministers are most unevenly distributed, however; some churches, especially in certain settlements, have only self-taught ministers; a few other churches have a great percentage of well-trained ministers. Thus the churches of

Gnadenfeld and Rueckenu have a veritable abundance of missionaries (foreign), theological, and pedagogical ministers, and the Halbstadt pulpit is served in sequence by six theological pedagogical ministers (from various congregations). The Chortitza Mennonite Church and the Kuban M.B. Church came next (in the latter all the ministers are either active or retired teachers). Among the ministers (that we know of) there are 40 active village teachers—12 secondary teachers—and 4 teachers of religion at middle schools.

§425(2) There are very few paid ministers, hardly one out of twenty ministers receives a regular wage. Those who receive a wage are the "itinerant or visitation" ministers and a few elders and other ministers. (Wage minimum, 700 rubles.) Some elders receive compensation for "time spent on trips," i.e., for time spent on official visits, aside from travel expenses; or some churches (better—some members of the church) buy one (or two) farms as church property and place it at the elder's disposal for management—or, more probably for lease on "one-half basis." Much is given unofficially as a "love offering"; as to the moral worth of such a practice, one could hold various opinions. There is something abnormal, unevangelical in this. Compare above #11,c. "Heinrich Richert's plow is standing in the furrow, because he had to unhitch his horses in order to preach a funeral message, or something similar!!" The virtue of sacrificial ministers will not be able to stop the damage which churches are heaping upon themselves by their unjust exploitation of the poorer ministers, in comparison to the average wealth of the whole church. This matter is downright ridiculous and sad; and for the whole church it is both destructive and dishonorable. Each church should have a minister, adequately provided for, in charge of the regular services, alongside the largest possible number of ministers of equal stature, but who "preach for the love of preaching." Whether the person paid is an elder or one of the other ministers would depend only upon circumstances and spiritual gifts (compare below, #434!). As a rule, the church's bookkeeper is paid, and elders usually give this position to ministers, deacons, or even another church member, but they themselves usually retain the responsibility of supervision.

XLIV.
THE SPIRITUAL CHARACTER OF THE CHURCHES AND CLERGY

§426 After this historical-statistical overview, we want to try to describe the spiritual character and development of the churches and their ministers in the important period from 1860 to 1910 by presenting a few

biographies and discourses, as well as other accomplishments of the ministers. In this regard compare ## 417, II, III, and 420, 2.

A. Biographies and Discourses of some Ministers of the "Old Colony"

1) Heinrich Epp, Chortitza Secondary School Teacher and Church Elder, and his Co-Workers.

We refer to what has already been said about Epp as pedagogue under "Chortitza Secondary School." Here we present him as a spiritual teacher and leader of his church, partially as reported by one of his students, who, in #347, describes him to us as a secondary school teacher:

". . . Our teacher was a noble man, who had appropriated Matthew 16:24 and to whom no service was too onerous, whether in the school, or in the church. He was conscious of the fact that he owed service to the highest Lord. . . . I never noticed that students found a discrepancy between his word and deed. When our teacher, after having served almost 25 years in the ministry with the same faithfulness as in his teaching, was called to be elder by his church, he came before the church and its leader with the words: 'Behold, here I am, you called me.' This was not a strong manifestation of self-confidence on his part, but rather a deep submission to the will of Him who is the head of the church. . . . He has a godly mission to fulfill; that is his conviction. The word, 'You will be my witness!' holds true for him as well. Thus he understands himself inwardly as standing in the apostolic succession, doing the work of his Master. From Him he receives grace upon grace. 'I can not walk alone. . . .' In my opinion, this line of poetry describes his humble renunciation of all self-assertion and his unconditional and unshakable submission to and faith in his Lord.

"His faith, his Christianity, were free from all duplicity. One never heard him say now yes, and then no, but always yes, as in Christ Jesus (II Cor. 1:19). . . . He praised Him [Jesus] before his students in classes as well as in his preaching from the pulpit with words of enthusiasm. All his spiritual activities focused in this one central concern. . . . : 'For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.'

"Because of this, this Christian man also had the unlimited confidence of his congregation. The various commissions with which it entrusted him gave evidence of such a trust. In the beginning of the seventies, when the compulsory military service law was being prepared . . . [Minister Epp was one of the first deputies to be sent to St. Petersburg in this matter—cf. above, *#267*, 2]. How he thought about this matter, was clearly related before the church prior to his

departure. . . . He compared the riches of our Mennonite Confession and our opposition to military service—which is in keeping with Christ's kingdom of peace—with our material riches, revealing to the congregation its relative concern for the first and far too great concern for the latter. His speech jolted the conscience of the congregation out of its slumber. The determination of his Christian, i.e., Mennonite point of view did not leave the large congregation untouched, that was evident by the reaction manifested by the large gathering. . . .

"The consciousness that he was a servant of the Lord gave him direction in all of his dealings, but also kept him from all complaints or demands for any kind of remuneration. Recently a minister said . . . he tried to persuade Elder Epp on a journey to Orenburg to travel second class in order to be able to get some rest on a journey that was strenuous at best; but his persuasive eloquence proved fruitless. . . .

"When I stand at the graveside of my teacher, I sometimes paraphrase the poet and think: 'How can a space so narrow and small, confine the faithfulness of a man.'"

Further details follow, taken from the important brochure, "Heinrich Epp," already mentioned above in #347, where, aside from a special biography of Epp, we are also given a nearly complete picture of his co-workers and his surroundings. As space permits, his co-workers and their discourses will also be accorded due recognition. We are grateful for the permission to print this material, since there is only very little source material available that deals with the "Old-Colony." At the same time we refer the reader back to #57 and our closing sentence to that paragraph. We read (partially shortened):

". . . On April 21, 1864, teacher Epp—as he was soon generally referred to—was called, by election, as minister of the Chortitza congregation. For thirteen years, now, he has worked with all his strength in both professions: as teacher and minister. A glorious reward was the result. Many men, who are still teachers today, or who are involved in some other blessed ministry, were once his students. . . .

"When, with the passage of time, the demands of the congregation became too heavy for Epp, he resigned (1877) his teaching post at the secondary school. After nineteen years of productive work, he left the school . . . in order to give his whole attention to the ministry. . . .

"His constant prayer relationship with his God gave the right kind of power already to his earliest sermons. These powerful sermons caused people to say: 'Teacher Epp will preach like his father.' [Teacher D. Hausknecht's friend—cf. above.] People enjoyed listening to his sermons. Teacher Epp was invited to serve at weddings, funerals, and

family affairs now in this and now in that village. Concerning him and his sermons we read the following remarks in the *Odessa Zeitung:* 'His discourses were always substantial and his thoughts always well expressed. He could, without much effort or preparation, develop a theme in a gripping manner. But he was humble enough not to place himself above the average preacher.'

"With his comprehensive knowledge and abilities he not only served the church, but also each individual. . . . People also approached Epp with requests for poems for special occasions, the preparation of petitions and building plans, etc. He was thus constantly in demand. And, without demanding any kind of remuneration, he tried to live up to the trust which people placed in him. When at last Elder Gerhard Dyck, because of old age, was forced to arrange the election of an elder, teacher Epp was elected with a majority. He found it extremely difficult to follow the call to this high office. 'Will I be able to give proper leadership to the church? Will it be built by me?' These were questions which he did not dare to answer with a definite 'yes.' Called on April 19, 1885, he was, on the 26th of the same month, ordained as elder by Elder G. Dyck. In his speech which followed based on I Sam. 3:8: 'Behold, I am here, you called me,' and John 21, 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep!' he directed the congregation's attention to the fact that he recognized God's call in the election. The gathering was so large that the church could not nearly contain the crowd. The new elder's heart groaned: 'O Lord, be merciful unto me!' And the Lord added His blessing to his work. More and more, the congregation realized his faithfulness and conscientiousness, even in the most minute details. Consequently, the entire church responded by returning love and trust to him.

"The fact that his mind was constantly fixed on the eternal, made him a much sought after counselor for the sick and tempted. How grateful he was to God when he was able to comfort a soul and strengthen its faith in the sinner's savior! And how powerful were his exhortations to the baptismal candidates and how serious his appeals to parents! Add to this his magnificent, large stature, his forehead, on which the splendor of eternity rested, his blue, charming eyes, his fluent delivery and powerful voice which constantly called the congregation to 'Repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!' or, 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with His stripes we are healed.' And this teacher still stands before our souls and preaches!

"Teacher Epp loved sociable gatherings. He enjoyed talking with his neighbors and good friends. With his humor he was able to draw many hearts to himself.

"He personally took care of the extensive correspondence which the office of an elder at the large Chortitza congregation brought with it with the greatest of punctuality and neatness. In like manner he looked after the church records of the Chortitza parish, all of which he did without the reimbursement of expenses incurred and work done.

"After twenty-five years of such tireless [church] work [April 21, 1889], his friends and students could not be restrained from giving their teacher a simple, yet heartwarming celebration. This jubilee record is taken from the *Mennonitische Blaetter* of 1889: ' Jubilees are seldom celebrated among us; many still look upon them as a kind of innovation. Because of this, only close relatives and friends were invited to this occasion. In collaboration with the local ministers, the Chortitza male choir, together with the help of a number of church members, practiced a few songs, in order to present the beloved, venerable elder with all best wishes in word and song. Due to certain circumstances, the jubilee celebration had to be held in the evening. At seven o'clock in the evening all of the participants met in the Chortitza factory school, belonging to Lepp and Wallman, the meeting place of the male choir society. From here they went to the home of the celebrant. A few relatives and friends had already arrived there and presented their congratulations. The family had reserved the rather large room for the male choir. It was already getting dark when the singers quietly took their places. Secondary school teacher Jakob Klaassen, the male choir conductor, intoned the pitch, the door between the large room and the guest room was opened, and the mighty sound waves, formed by some fifty men, of the "Angels' Chorus" from Joseph Haydn's *The Creation* streamed into the room. After this introduction, Minister Isaak Dyck [the current elder] greeted Epp with a stirring and heart-warming message. Since Elder Dyck, upon our request, gave us permission to print it, we will present it in its entirety here: "Honorable Elder! Highly regarded celebrant! Twenty-five years have passed since by the will of God, you were called in the ministry of the congregation. That is grace, God's immence grace. I stand before you as one commissioned by this group, but also driven by my own heart's desire, to congratulate you upon so much grace and to pray for God's blessing upon you. We hope and pray that God, who so graciously loves and gives, will continue to shower His blessing upon you and strengthen you for your future ministry.

"I do not deem it my duty to describe the past twenty-five years and all that they entail with regard to your many-sided activities, that is, the great worth of the many services you have rendered in Christ's stead, in greater detail. The evaluation of services rendered with regard to this holy area is God's domain. He will reward a thousandfold what you have

done for us, be it for the poor, the suffering brethren, or in the area of the Gospel of peace. To be in God's hand is reward enough for our deeds of love. Walking along life's journey with one another in a saving, loving, and forgiving way, caring for one another in a brotherly manner, will bear witness to the fact that we serve God. However, I do not wish to speak any further concerning these matters here.

"The matter that really touches our hearts and burns upon our lips today, are the emotions and expressions of gratitude toward God and toward you. today we wish to thank you for all your care and concern, your work and faithfulness, which you, worthy celebrant, have taken upon yourself in the course of these twenty-five years and carried as the ' Lord's burden ' without complaint. And you have always done it in the conviction: not that I do it, but I do it gladly and without remuneration; in a word, I do it because of Christ. Therein lies the glory of Christ's priestly ministry. We wish to thank you that you did not tire in your efforts to follow the commands of the Lord, with an uninterrupted enthusiasm, to go, to teach, to preach, to exhort, and to baptize in the name of Christ. In a word, we thank you that, in a loving and faithful manner, you always had the eternal welfare of your flock at heart, over which the Heavenly Father placed you as guardian, and made their care your first concern.

"Highly regarded elder, celebrant, friend, and brother in Christ! You shall be assured of the most devoted 'thank you' from the congregation—from us all—till that time fast approaching, when no earthly profession or brotherly love will any longer be practiced, up to the grave and beyond the grave, up to the blessed world, created by God, where we shall see and find one another again and be reunited—in the land of the eternally living.

"When that time with its life will have begun (to which God in Christ help us all!) we will sing with you, and you with us, the glorious and heavenly song of praise sung by thousands and millions of saved souls to God and the Lamb."

"Thereupon the male choir sang the dedicatory song to the tune of: 'How will it be, when finally,' which was followed by congratulations extended by Minister Johann Epp. Taking the group's expression of joy and thanksgiving as his point of departure, he drew attention to the grace through which the celebrant as well as the congregation had been granted the good fortune to celebrate this day. He thanked the elder for his sacrificial love and closed with the verse of Scripture: ' The Lord has done great things for us; of this we are glad.' Whereupon the male choir intoned: 'Jehovah, Your Name!'

"The worthy celebrant, visibly moved, thanked those present with touching words for their demonstration of love and respect. He too confessed: 'It is God's gracious care which has allowed us to celebrate this day. Praise and honor belong to Him. And if that which was sown in weakness has produced fruit, it was due to the mercy which God has shed upon His children. The foundation of the eternal truth, revealed to us in God's Word, on which I have stood until now, shall continue, in every respect, to provide the stability of my tenure in office. My deepest longing is that all those present, the majority of whom I have already attempted to influence in this direction in school, indeed, that the whole life of the congregation would base its life on that holy teaching. For it is only then, at the end of this life before God's throne, that the gift of perfection will be given us; it is there in that blessed eternity, that we shall experience a reunion through the grace which God has vouchsafed us; and it is there that I shall be able to confess in all humility: 'Here, Lord, are those you have entrusted to us.' With these words Elder Epp concluded his remarks, commending himself to their intercessory prayers before God's throne. The song, 'Praise and Worship to Thee' by Bortniansky and the blessings of the celebrant upon those present, brought the inspiring celebration to a close.

"For seven years Epp continued as chairman of the Secondary School Board, serving as a spiritual member on the board after that. The office of elder he filled for eleven years. While in that office he annually had to make long journeys into the various districts of Ekaterinoslav, Melitopol, and Kharkov to serve the Chortitza Mennonites living in those areas with baptism and the Lord's Supper. In September of 1894 he also made a journey to the settlers in the region around Orenburg where he administered the Lord's Supper in two different places and organized the congregations through the holding of elections of the first ministers. All in all, Elder Heinrich Epp observed the Lord's Supper with his congregation some 208 times and baptized 1616 young men and 1701 young women, that is 3317 persons, in 102 separate baptismal festivals. He preached 1,230 sermons, conducted 1,227 funerals, performed 417 wedding ceremonies, and spoke 425 times at various other occasions. In sum: 3,299.

"The last itinerant journey was unusually hard on him, and he was obviously happy when he had finally concluded it on July 2, 1895. From this time on his family noticed a more serious mood in him than usual. For example, on the Thursday before his first attack of illness he said to his wife: 'It seems to me that I don't belong here anymore.' But he was happy that he would once again be able to sit in his well-loved place in church the next Sunday (July 9th). His wish, however, was not to be fulfilled. Right on Sunday, at 3 o'clock in the morning, he had a serious

attack. The painful cramps, which the beloved elder suffered, caused the family to fear that he was mortally ill. However, God be praised, he could once more get well, although slowly. For two days he was unconscious, only on the third day did he return to consciousness. At first his tongue seemed to be paralyzed; but slowly the power of speech returned to him. The doctors declared his illness to be a stroke, and forbade him all excitement. But it was difficult for the elder to obey them since he did not consider himself to be ill.

"Thus once more was the father given back to his family, and the elder given back to his church. Gradually his health returned; together with his wife he visited his relatives and was once again able to attend the worship services. He needed to be in church, he stated repeatedly, even his weakened condition could not keep him away. However, the drive to church and the long hours of sitting there were too much of a strain on him. On Sunday, September 24, eleven weeks after the first attack, he suffered the second one. As usual, the elder had also gone to church on this Sunday. Here suddenly his face turned red, then pale, and by the end of the service he could no longer move his right hand—it was completely powerless. When they arrived home he could dismount the wagon and enter his room only with the help of others. Here he seated himself in his beloved sofa-corner, but could not talk much any more. When the doctor, who had been immediately called, arrived, he was already unconscious. The attack followed very quickly; as it appeared, however, somewhat less serious than the first. But on the following day the sick man was fully conscious and could talk once again. He recovered much faster and more completely from this attack than from the first one.

"The effects of his two attacks remained, however: his hearing had become impaired, his speech was less fluent, and his memory had also suffered. And yet while the beloved elder improved physically, his behavior changed. He became more withdrawn. He often thought of death and said: 'You don't know, but I could suddenly die.' On his birthday and on Christmas he was very serious. He regularly attended church services. At first he did not want to hear anything about the election of an elder. When his wife and children asked him to be more considerate of himself, he said: 'Children, you don't understand, I have to keep up with my duties. He who gave me this office will also provide me with the strength to fulfill my obligations.' However, on January 4, 1896, at a general brotherhood meeting, he named an approximate date for the election of a new elder. In the same month, on two successive Sundays, he observed the Lord's Supper with the members gathered in the Chortitza Church for the last time. Afterwards he said to his wife: 'You see, I was tired, but it went well.' Then, on Palm Sunday, March

17, he preached once more, a sermon on Matthew 21:1-9. But this, his last word to the church, was no longer delivered spontaneously; he was forced to read it.

"Meanwhile, April 25, the day set for the election by the elder, came inexorably closer. The concern for the church lay heavy upon the suffering elder. He became even more quiet and often walked up and down in his room. He was unable to sleep. He himself once said to his wife that it was very hard on him. For hours he would sit withdrawn in his study, read his Bible and order his papers. But during the last few days of his life he was cheerful and lively. In order to regain his strength, he went on walks to his relatives, but this proved to be a strain on him. One evening he was humming one of his favorite songs, the way he used to in his healthy days. 'How this melody touched me! The beautiful hope I had became a certainty: my dear father will get completely well,' writes Dietrich Epp, son of the elder. He continues: 'On April 11, father was merry all day long, telling many jokes. Approximately 8 o'clock in the evening he went outside, stayed there somewhat long, and when he returned he did not feel well. He sat down in his sofa corner. I immediately went to fetch the doctor, and when I returned, father already lay motionless and absent-minded on his bed. Two attacks of cramps followed in quick succession, stronger and more intense than before. . . . The third attack followed soon thereafter. . . . He died, as the doctor verified—from a heart attack. . . .' Thus, our beloved elder was able to enter into the land of rest, the land of his longing, to be with his Lord and Master. His warning and comforting voice, his prayers of supplication, have been silenced! The sad news of his death quickly spread throughout our widely scattered congregation. Our elder has died!

"On the day of the funeral, Minister Johann Epp held a short valedictory address in the home of the deceased. Thereupon the body was brought into the church for viewing. How peaceful and friendly he lay there in that coffin! It took a long time for the many people, all of whom wanted to look once more into the loving face of their elder, to file by the coffin. Among the mourners were Russians, Jews, and especially many non-Mennonite factory workers.

"After Isaak Dyck, our present elder, had given expression to the emotions of the congregation in deeply sorrowful and moving words, Elder Peter Klassen [of the Kronsweide church] preached the funeral message. In spite of the pouring rain, a long funeral procession escorted the body to the Chortitza graveyard a good distance away. There the body was buried, with the son, Minister David Epp, speaking the words of blessing and the local choir singing songs of sorrow. Quietly the crowd left the cemetery. The invited guests went to the home of the mourning

family where the Elders Dirks [of Gnadenfeld] and Goerz [of Ohrloff] spoke eulogies of the deceased in warm terms.

"The day following the funeral, a relatively large crowd once again gathered in the home of the deceased. Students of the now departed, ministers W. Dyck and H. Epp, once again made short speeches, whereupon the Minister J. Wiebe [afterwards elder of Kronsweide], also a former student of Epp, in a touching prayer thanked God for such a man, praying that He would richly reward the sorrowing widow for all the good she had done for the departed elder. And the whole gathering sobbingly said: 'Amen.'"

§427 1a) Here we present the above-mentioned funeral address by the now deceased Elder Peter Klassen. (All other discourses mentioned above are also printed in the pamphlet cited above.) Since we were compelled to include a discourse by a Mennonite elder in the beginning of our book in order to demonstrate the spiritual and cultural impoverishment of the office of elder, we now deem it our unavoidable duty to present this, as well as other discourses, for the purpose of comparison. We stress the fact that the departed honorable P. Klassen was a "completely self-taught" man, not one of our lay school teachers (as Heinrich Richert and others), but in the real sense of the word one of our "farmer theologians." We do not mean to say that his sermon was different from those of his contemporaries; this only makes his document the more valuable to us because it is truly characteristic. The discourses of our "theologians" (#424) compare with those of their believing colleagues of other evangelical churches.

"The Grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen. Dearly beloved friends in Christ! Since it has become my responsibility to bring the message at the funeral of our beloved elder, I want to fulfil my obligation to the best of my ability. But I feel myself so poorly prepared and so inadequate to the task; nor do I know how to challenge your hearts on this occasion. Nevertheless, may the Lord be gracious to us and may He speak to us through the departed one, so dear to all of us. This would grip our hearts more powerfully than my weak and imperfect speech. But since I believe that it was not too difficult for him to bid us farewell, I wish to turn your attention to Genesis 24:56 where we read: 'Let me depart, that I may go to my master.'

"Thus spoke Abraham's servant when he had accomplished his master's commission. And our dearly beloved brother and elder, who now rests in peace in this coffin also speaks; 'let me depart, that I may go to my master!' Quite suddenly, quite unexpectedly he had to step down from his office and discontinue his work in God's vineyard. How

many journeys has he made; how often has he come home tired and faint, only seldom to rest— even though he greatly desired to rest. But then, behold, there is a sudden knock at his heart, and a voice speaks from above: 'Your rest is not here! This rest is only all too soon interrupted by the unrest of the world. But he who enters God's rest also ceases from his labors, as God did from his (Heb. 4:10). You shall now do this as well! Your evening of rest has come. Now you shall come home into your Father's house, in which Jesus said that there are many mansions.' A place is also prepared for each of us. O that none would sacrifice this place for a vile lentil soup the way Esau did who sold his birthright and was cheated out of his father's blessing. Think upon the admonitions of your departed elder often and take them as seriously as he did. For he was a faithful shepherd to you; nor did he seek his own advantage, but preached the Gospel without remuneration. He served you to the very end, carrying you in his heart with intercessory prayers. But there is an end to everything, even the mouth of intercession becomes dumb. For us that is the seriousness of the hour which we must consider. That is why our loving Savior tells us to consider the time and seek first the kingdom of God in order to be saved. Concerning Jerusalem, Jesus once said: 'Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes!' My beloved, he preaches the same to us! And how often has not this servant of God, now resting in this coffin, preached in vain to souls, as Jesus did to Jerusalem, pleading with tears: 'Be ye reconciled unto God!' Have you taken his admonitions to heart, and have you thought about the time of your visitation? O, brethren and sisters, consider it! Consider it here at the coffin of your beloved elder. His mouth has spoken its last, but the Lord still speaks to your hearts through the body, warning you and us all of our end, our death. Will you not heed it? For soon this impression too will leave you and be erased from your heart. And yet, this is such a serious hour for each one of us who sorrow and shed tears at the coffin of our beloved friend. But let us look beyond this sorrow to that place above where our home is; and let us not sorrow as those who have no hope. And you, beloved sister in Christ, as you accompany the husband you loved so much in life to the grave, leave your sorrow and seek comfort from Jesus, your Savior, who also takes mercy on the widows and orphans and who has given us the promise that he will be with Him forever and see the glory which His Heavenly Father has given him. You, and we all, shall share in this. He says: when I am lifted up I shall draw all men unto myself. He has been lifted up, and therefore the rest will also follow, and all His promises will be fulfilled. He will comfort you and turn your sorrow into joy. You too, children, have heavy hearts filled with sorrow, for there are only a few moments left to look into the face of

your beloved father. Soon he will be taken away and you will see him here no more. But even this last look at his body gives us little comfort from the natural perspective. Indeed, it only gives occasion for greater sorrow because the signs of decay are already apparent. And that causes us grief. Where is that gracious face which we once beheld with such delight? Where is the voice which spoke so urgently to our hearts? All of that is gone, all has died away, and we have nothing more urgent to do than to place him into his grave, where his remains will fall prey to complete decay. For he too must experience the words God spoke to Adam. 'You are dust and to dust you shall return.' That was the fruit of his sin. Through sin death entered our world and spread to all men because all men sinned. Thus the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. For as in Adam all die, so shall all be made alive in Christ Jesus. That is our faith, our hope, and our comfort at the graveside of our loved ones. That shall also be your comfort, as you sorrow at the passing of your dearly beloved father. You shall meet again, changed, blessed, and immortal, in the heavenly rooms of eternity, and your heart will rejoice and be glad. Here we have no permanent city, but we seek the eternal one. We tarry only a little while in this world before we must hurriedly depart. Our walk, Paul says, is in heaven. There is our promised resting place. It is there that we shall rest from all our labors. It is to that place that Christ invites us, calling out: 'Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest.' Our friend and elder in this coffin has followed His call. Nor can the sorrow and tears of his relatives and loved ones keep him back. If he were still able to look into your face and speak, he would call to you pleadingly, speaking words of comfort: 'Let me depart, that I may go to my master.' There he will rest from all his labors. At times the duties of his office became difficult for him, and it will soon be a year since the strength of his body was broken. But the Lord allowed him to catch his breath once more and gave him enough strength to break the blessed bread and extend the blessed cup to his congregation in remembrance of our Lord in this holy place. The thought, which Jesus expressed to His disciples at the last supper: 'I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day where I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom,' was probably in his mind at that time as well. The emotions which such or similar words may call forth in the hearts and minds of those involved, you may yourself be aware of. But I think that when Jesus said these words and revealed these things to His disciples, they must have looked at one another, and then turned their eyes upon the Lord. A holy, solemn stillness came upon them, and they could not comprehend it, but their hearts became sorrowful. They felt that something great was to happen among them, something for which Jesus

was preparing Himself, but yet they did not understand Him. Did He wish to leave them alone? No, He did not want to do that. Had He not said to them: 'Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age?' Be that as it may, where death breaks into such a circle of friends, even though not in as harsh a manner as it did with Jesus and His disciples, there will be sorrow and tears. Even Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, and the Jews who saw it, said among themselves: 'Behold, how He loved him.' He also loves us, as much as He loved Lazarus. If only we really knew how to appreciate His love for us, and were always concerned to love Him in return! For that is the crux of the matter: if we love Jesus then our heavenly Father also loves us, as Jesus says: 'The Father loves you, because you love Me and believe that I have come from God.' However, He has also loved us from the creation of the world, before we ever knew Jesus, as John has witnessed in that verse: 'For God so loved the world.' Therefore let us love Him, for He first loved us. Yea, I have always loved you, says the Lord, therefore have I, out of sheer mercy, drawn you to Myself. And, if he draws us thus, imparting His grace to us through the proclamation of the Gospel, then we should also willingly follow Him. For He has only one purpose in drawing us to Him, which is to save us and make us happy. What then holds us back, that we take such feeble steps? What makes our departure from this world so difficult when it is filled only with disappointment, distress, and misery? Do we see our loved ones standing sorrowfully at our coffin in advance? If so, we wish to speak to them as the hopeful children of faith:? 'Let me depart, that I may go to my master.' Think of the words which Martha spoke to her sister Mary: 'the master is here and is calling you,' whereupon she arose quickly and came to Jesus. In Him is comfort and peace. It is to that place that our friend, brother, and elder, has gone to rest from his labors. And we too will go home some day: you and I, and all people, for we have here no abiding city; we are created for eternity. We must not forget this. Therefore, arise dear soul, prepare to meet your God so that when the hour for your departure strikes you will not need to fear, but will, in good confidence, be able to speak words of comfort to your loved ones: 'Let me go home in peace and weep not, then I die more easily, for I am going to be with the Lord.' Therefore, 'Let me depart, that I may go to my Lord.' A similar word of comfort, spoken by a dying soul, can encourage us when we are filled with sorrow. Do such words of a dying person not sound almost supernatural and transfigured? O, how often one stands at the bedside of a loved one and tries to listen for that last word from his lips which is to give comfort and hope to those who stay behind. Unfortunately, the ability to speak to the very end is not granted to everyone. The strength to speak is often broken, even prior to death. One only sees and hears the last throes of death amidst moaning and

groaning, until the eye is closed in death. For the pain of death is often very great and difficult. Death is harsh and bitter, coming into the world as a penalty for sin, and therefore cannot be easy and painless for us. Even Jesus departed with a cry. But once He had overcome the pain of death, He could confidently say: 'It is finished. Father, I commend my spirit into your hands.' Even though the rivers of Belial may on occasion frighten the dying soul as he wanders in the valley of the shadow of death, he will fear no evil. And even though he may hesitantly utter the complaint in the anguish of death from the bottom of his soul: 'My God, my God, why have You forsaken me,' this dare not lead us to despair. Even under such circumstances it is apparent that He is dealing with His God, who never leaves him in the lurch. And that buoys up our hope in times of difficulty and comforts us. Be that as it may, as dark as it may seem at the bedside of a poor human creature, we must still commend him to God, we dare not forget that Jesus said with regard to the question of salvation: 'What is impossible with men is possible with God.' In such instances we must only pray for him. For the Lord says: 'For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In a moment of wrath I hid my face a little from you, but I will have compassion upon you with everlasting grace.' Therefore He is still, in all seriousness, a compassionate God, even though we may on occasion feel He has forsaken us for a moment. Faith is the decisive element at such times. We are to place our trust in God, even when everything appears to be dark. For it is an art to believe especially when one feels himself forsaken. To believe when everything goes well, is easy; when there are no special trials, one knows how to have faith. But in the difficult hours of trial, tribulations, and want, one is refined, tested, and tempted. Then we need to pray, 'Lord, increase our faith,' and listen to His Word. On the other hand, we dare not underestimate the afflictions and suffering, or anything else that may come our way in this world, for they may well become burdensome enough for us. But what are they in comparison to that great glory, which is to be revealed to us? John had the privilege of looking at that glory, and, quite enraptured, wrote the following: 'After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels stood round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.' Then one of the elders addressed me, saying,

'Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?' I said to him, 'Sir, you know!' And he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." ' When once our spirit can see across to that very blessed band, and we possess the hope of being there once as well, then we will be able to make light of many things in this world and anticipate the future. There we will also understand the words of Paul, when he says: 'My desire is to depart and be at home with Christ.' And we would not think too much of life in this world. Therefore, do not be sorrowful, my dear brethren and sisters, as though you are experiencing a great sorrow when death creates a gap amongst you. But look up to Jesus, who has said, 'I am the Ressurection and life.' Follow Him, for He says: 'I am the way, the truth and life. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' And that, dearly beloved, is what we need if we do not wish to stray, stumble, or fall. Only this is sure: Jesus alone is my salvation, in life as in death. This must be secure in our hearts. For there is no other salvation; as inventive as this world may be, it will always come back to this: 'And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.' We must be freed from all things and look only to Jesus. We are to hold all our possessions as though we did not possess them. Nothing shall captivate us. We are at all times to live in such a manner that we can say, with regard to our life and activity: 'For if we live, we live unto the Lord, and if we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' Then the day of death will not frighten us nor come at an inopportune time; for when death knocks on our heart's door, we are prepared to follow; and all the strings and chains which could still hold us here, are broken. No ties of friendship, no love of children, as great as they may be, could make our departure difficult. At this point I would have only one possible request of my loved ones, which I make as lovingly and as carefully as I can: 'Let me depart, that I may go to my Lord.' That is where I desire to be. It is glorious and good for us when we stand in such a relationship to our God and Savior, when we are already at home there, while still walking here below. That is what Paul meant when he said: 'Our walk is in heaven.' But it is sad to have to say that many things still happen here on earth that are not heavenly. We

stick to this earth and are so earthly minded. And yet we know only too well that these earthly things were not made for heaven and can only be a hindrance to us as we attempt to enter the kingdom of God. O how much of this has yet to melt away and be refined, until our walk becomes a walk in heaven, from whence we await our Savior Jesus Christ, our Lord, who will transform our mortal body, and make it like His resurrection body in appearance, in order that He should bring all things in subjection to Himself. And even though the complete transformation will finally be brought about there, through death Christ must already take shape in us here, so that we can become more and more like Him. He shall be the constant example that we follow. And now ask yourself, dearly beloved, in this so serious an hour for all of us, how far have you come in this regard? Ask this now as you stand at the coffin of our beloved elder who untiringly pointed us to Christ: how have we followed him? Who knows how soon you too will be a similar corpse. Then your questions and deeds will have an end; then you cannot make changes in your life, or rectify things; then your time of grace is gone. But the more we die to the illusions of this world, the more Christ will be formed in us, and we will become like unto His transformed body. John writes: 'Whoever is born of God, overcomes this world, and our faith is the victory which has overcome the world.' That is the issue. Without faith we will not fight against sin and the world in deadly earnest; it will only be a weak flailing in the air. Faith, however, renews our strength and steels our courage, giving us power and endurance to overcome the lusts of the world so that we may finally boast: 'But thanks be unto God who has given us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.' We may still be living in the world, but we do not live for the world. 'Our aspirations are directed upwards, to that place where so many already praise God.' They are directed toward Him who is our salvation. And when the hour of our departure finally arrives, the hour of our going home, then we look with hope toward God and seek to comfort those who may yet sorrow for us with the already oft quoted words: 'Let me depart, that I may go to my Lord.' May God grant grace that all of us could end our life here in this way and go home to our Lord in peace. Yes, Lord Jesus, faithful Savior, help us in this!" [Klassen's biographical data—see *##61* (*2*) and *415*, II.]

2) The Two Current Elders of the "Old Colony" §428

a) Isaak Gerhard Dyck, elder of the Chortitza Church, was born to the church elder, Gerhard Dyck, December 9, 1847. He attended the Chortitza Secondary School under Heinrich Epp, later his predecessor as elder. For three years he was elementary school teacher at Grossfuerstenland, where he was elected as minister on January 18, 1876. For eight years he was chaplain in one of the forestry camps and for three years he

was president, that is, in charge of all matters relating to the forestry service. He was sent to St. Petersburg to represent the churches several times: to bring greetings to the royal couple on the occasion of their marriage and coronation (already representing the sickly Elder Heinrich Epp, under whom he functioned as special "helper" for a number of years). On April 25, 1896, he was elected as elder, and ordained by Elder Peter Klassen of the Kronsweide Church (cf. above: "Chortitza School Board"). In 1907, he, together with Elder Abram Goerz, was elected to represent the Mennonites of Russia in matters of faith (cf. above: #291).

b) Johann Peter Klassen, elder of the Kronsweide Church, was born the son of Elder Peter Klassen, May 15, 1868. He attended the village school at Neu-Schoenwiese for nine years. Later he graduated from the Chortitza Secondary School, headed by Peter Riediger and Johann Klassen, passed the government examination as elementary school teacher and served in that capacity for five years. He became a minister in 1904, and elder in 1907. He was ordained by Elder Isaak Dyck of Chortitza, who had been ordained by his father.

B. Biographies and Discourses, etc. of some Molotschna Ministers

1. From Former Times

§429 a) Elder August Lenzmann [27] was born on January 29, 1823, in Brenkenhofswalde (cf. above: #43ff) to a spiritually-minded Lutheran family well disposed toward the Mennonites. Prior to their emigration, these, and other like-minded families, joined the Brenkenhofswalde-Franztal congregation, later known as Gnadenfeld. His teacher in Brenkenhofswalde and Gnadenfeld was Heinrich Franz, Jr. He was baptized on May 27, 1837, at the age of fourteen, by Elder Wilhelm Lange in the village school of Gnadenfeld, which at that time also served as the place of worship for the Gnadenfeld congregation. In 1851 he was elected as minister, in August of 1854 he was called to the office of elder, and, in September of the same year, he was ordained by Elder Bernhard Fast of Ohrloff. The upheavals occasioned in the Gnadenfeld congregation by the "Exodus" of the "Brethren" and the "Templers," (cf. above: ##52 and 70ff), led Lenzmann gradually into the camp of the most adamant opponents of his once intimate friends and those who to a certain extent thought like him. He died on July 30, 1877, after many years of failing health. We direct the reader's attention to our special description of Lenzmann in #113 above, especially to point d. Lenzmann was one of the most prominent personalities among our Russian-Mennonite elders, an equal of Jakob Dyck, Jr., Bernhard Fast, Heinrich Epp, and Isaak Peters.

b) Minister Heinrich Richert. We refer the reader to what was said in "Village School Teachers, Molotschna." §430

c) With regard to a powerful and abiding influence which he exerted upon our fellowship, Minister Bernhard Harder was one of the most important spiritual figures in the line of outstanding personalities in the Russian Mennonite society, especially in the realm of spiritual matters as a minister. As indicated above, as a figure of major importance, we would place him immediately behind our most important intellectual giant, Johann Cornies. His importance for the spiritual elevation of our fellowship, most immediately through his personal power as the creator of a new method of preaching, is extended into the entire "Brotherhood Movement." That was the impression we gained from years of personal observation during his lifetime; and this impression has remained with us, even though more than a quarter of a century has passed since his death. §431

Bernhard Harder was born March 5, 1832, in Halbstadt, the eighth of nine children whose parents were humble folk living in the lowliest of circumstances. Father Harder died when Bernhard was eleven years old. His mother, nee Berg, remained unforgettably dear to him until his death. Her influence on his spiritual-moral development must have been profound and must have begun with his infancy, a wholesome influence which made it possible for him to say in this regard: "I have inherited that from my mother." From childhood on he wanted to become a teacher and preacher. It was Elder Bernhard Fast who had early influenced him in the latter direction, while his ideal teacher, Tobias Voth, was then already a legendary figure. During his years as a boy, youth, and young man, he was known as a speaker for special occasions, beginning his sermons playfully, in a joking manner and ending them worshipfully, causing much weeping (among children) at times or much rubbing of eyes (in later times among his grown-up friends).

In order to obtain the requisite education for the exalted position of teacher and preacher, Bernhard, at the age of ten, became a student (congregational pupil) at the new Secondary School in Halbstadt. This school is described in detail in #336 above. Harder's memories of his secondary school days were more sad than happy. Only a talented person with an unquenchable longing for the exalted and the holy could have acquired the foundation for the relatively broad knowledge which he later came to posses in such a school.

Upon the conclusion of his six years of study in the secondary school, Bernhard spent some time as apprentice secretary at the Area Administrative Office. Then he became a teacher, serving in that

capacity for twenty-six years. The places where he served (as far as we know) were: Juschanlee, Halbstadt, Blumenstein (two different times), Friedensruh, Alexanderwohl. The hallmark of his teaching was a great, sometimes very moving, love between teacher and student. As a teacher he did not quite achieve the stature of his somewhat older colleague Heinrich Richert, but as a preacher he surpassed him and all of his contemporaries to a considerable degree.

Around Christmas, 1860 (approximately one year after Richert) Harder, then teacher at Halbstadt, was called to the ministry by the Halbstadt-Ohrloff congregation. His childhood premonition and longing had become a reality. When the congregation decided to elect two ministers and one deacon, he was convinced in his heart that he would be one of the ministers elected. The election and the casting of the lot (the issue at stake was: which of the two, Harder or Peter Friesen of Tiegenhagen, both of whom had the same number of votes, should become minister and who deacon) decided what "he had previously known" and what he had predicted to his close friends. He did not enter "this onerous office and cross" with sighs, weeping, and complaints—as was customary in those days—but it was with jubilant joy and tremendous energy that he entered the service of his Lord. Ohm Bernhard Fast, Ludwig Hofacker (cf. #127, c., above), and Pastor Eduard Wuest (above #74, etc.) were his ideals. He had had a remarkable personal encounter with the latter: at a time of severe battles and spiritual defeats in his youth (he had already "given his heart to the Savior" as a secondary school student), he wished to see if Wuest, of whom he had already heard a great deal, could aid him in becoming established in his faith once more. He drove to Gnadenfeld during the time (around 1850) that Wuest regularly spent one Saturday and Sunday there every month. Together with others, he went to the house from which Wuest was to go to the church. Harder was standing in the entrance. All his anxiety and longing must have been written on his face and in his eyes. Wuest saw him, was startled, stopped, gave him a penetrating look, and spoke one of those words which God gave to him from time to time and which initiated "a movement toward eternity" in many people (cf. above: P. Dobbert): "Young man, how long are you going to waver. . . ." He made a reference to Jesus, and then Wuest went into the church. Harder followed him, listened to him now and on a number of other occasions. Wuest's faith in Christ and his style of preaching from now on became Harder's faith and example. At this point we need to emphasize two things: First, Harder believed with holy enthusiasm "his dear Savior," but never fell prey to "leaping," as did Claassen and his friends for a period of time (see above in "Wuest" etc.). Secondly, although he always opposed those who were "over-

joyous," at times mildly and at times harshly (even on occasion from the pulpit, if he found it necessary), he never adopted a purely negative attitude toward these "straying Brethren," as Elder Lenzmann did. Please refer to the above *##87* and *107*: "Journal of a Minister at Ohrloff" and Harder's "Letter to the Editor of the *Mennonitische Blaetter.*" Thirdly, Harder's disagreement with the overjoyous brethren (and his conviction, held to his dying day, that his baptism under Bernhard Fast had been a real baptism based upon faith) kept him from joining those leaving in 1860, and thus he remained in the "church" (although he, Elder Bernhard Fast, Johann Harder, and other officials, called it a "decadent" church—cf. #90). But because of this he was able to revitalize the pulpit and allow his work of renewal to serve all the Mennonites of Russia, something that would not have happened for at least ten years if he had joined the M.B. Church, given the mutual relationships existing between the large old and the small new groups at that time and the fact that sermons preached from the pulpit were not tolerated by the latter group for some time. Thus he was able, through his not inconsiderable personal presence (in conjunction with the entire Ohrloff Church Council) to serve as a bulwark of defence for those (temporarily "wild") reformers, the secessionists, whom he both loved and criticized at the same time. (It was from him, for example, that P. Dobbert received all of his information for the report to Privy Councillor Brun—*#170.*) Today most of the "Brethren" would call this, our "expediency," little more than a weak knuckling under (or "smearing," as they termed it in the period of storm and stress) in matters of faith, for at that time Harder's position was criticized most severely by them or interpreted as conscious faithlessness. Even scores of people who had come to a living faith through Harder were unable to understand how he could criticize the "church" so mercilessly and yet not leave it, especially when time and again people left him in droves and joined the M.B. Church. That was a bitter pill for Harder to swallow; and every time it happened he slackened temporarily in his powerful ministry. But each time he was able to rise like an "eagle," until, after one of his most soaring and powerful "flights," he came home mortally ill and died. Harder himself wavered a few times in his attitude toward the church. His "letter," #107, as well as his poem which follows, "The People I Love so Dearly," indicate his perception of the problems within the church. He had a great longing for a "perfect brotherly fellowship." It was the matter of baptism that kept him from joining the M.B. Church after the "overjoyous" movement had come to an end. As late as a year before his death (as we assuredly know) he was still experiencing powerful inner struggles concerning this question. (Cf. above: #258, "Exodus Church.")

Harder's preparation for the ministry consisted of a many-sided and extensive reading especially in theological, dogmatic, and devotional, but above all in the sermonic literature; frequent hearing of "Ohm Behrend" (Elder Bernhard Fast) who often, in his heated fervor, pushed his manuscript aside and allowed his full heart free reign, and as a rule closed his sermon in Low German; but most importantly, it was the example of Pastor Wuest, as well as his memorization of ten (if not twenty—we have forgotten) of Hofacker's sermons and the formal imbibing of Wuest's printed sermons.

His style of preaching was that of a fiery witness of great eloquence, mighty poetry, and burning love for Christ and sinners, whose only ambition was to unite the sinner with his Savior for all eternity. This desire gave rise to his method, whose sole purpose it was to reach the heart of the hearers through their eyes and ears—his whole body preached—for his Savior. These attributes already characterized his inaugural sermon in Halbstadt. The crowd left the church shaken and emotionally aroused. Already in the street, and then in their homes, they argued about his sermon: "That is totally Lutheran—some scolded; that is how pastors preach. That is exactly the way the mad Wuest does it." "That is God's voice! That is how we have long desired it to be! That is pure Gospel; those are gracious words!" "He has said the truth, but why exaggerate so—that's too far out!" That is how he began his ministry, that was his attitude, and that is how he went through praise and shame; that is how he was defied—and pitifully criticized; that is how he was ardently loved and bitterly persecuted. However, no one was able to hinder his work. The physical impression, his thundering voice, his graphic illustrations of the damnation of the unrepentant were definitely exaggerated at times; but his time stood in need of glaring pictures, of loud tones, for the people were not yet quite awake religiously, they were still deficient in spiritual understanding and biblical knowledge. In his worship services people at times fainted and had attacks of hysteria.

Harder did not live the kind of withdrawn, timid life typical of most of the "Brethren" of the time; nor was he the incessantly preaching prophet in everyday life, arousing fear in everyone: he was naively happy, intellectually witty, considerate of others, sympathetic to all, and extremely good-natured, so that he was often disappointed by people and his trust was abused. He gave his very last to the oppressed; as a result, he often experienced God's gracious help in his own need. We must break off here, but we want to call for a special biography of this worthy man to keep his memory alive among the people. His example brought a new school of ministers (i.e., a new direction and method) into being, and opened the floodgates that let in new streams of living waters.

At the ripe old age, when he had become completely "tired of being a school teacher, " he had once again to earn his bread as assistant secretary in the Area Administrative Office in Halbstadt. Many found this difficult to accept, but he accepted it with childlike humility as God's leading. After that—also through God's leading!—he became teacher of religion in the secondary school of Halbstadt for one year where he became a fountain of life to many students. During that time a "voluntary itinerant ministerial" committee was formed, and he was able to devote his last years fully to the preaching of the Gospel. After one of those long preaching journeys of great influence and expenditure of spiritual power and influence, he came back as we already mentioned a dying man, and died three days later, September 30, 1884, of a nervous fever. A deep longing to go "home" had possessed him during the last months of his life. A fine tombstone decorates his grave in the Neu-Halbstadt cemetery. One side of the tombstone has a big black Labrador cross on a massive base with the inscription: "Faith, Hope, Love"; the other side has his name, date of birth and death. Loving friends erected this tombstone in his memory.

Harder the poet. As poet he was most productive, particularly as poet for special occasions. He produced thousands of smaller and larger pieces to celebrate birthdays, family feasts, and all kinds of other festive occasions. But, his inner and outer life, his sorrows and joys, his spiritual conflicts and battles of life, his faith and hope are beautifully reflected in his poems. These have been published under the title *Spiritual Songs and Occasional Poems*, by Bernhard Harder; gathered and published by Heinrich Franz, Sr.,[28] Hamburg; J.F. Richter, 1888. The collection contains 1123 short, longer, and long poems. Instead of a sermon, we include a few of these poems by him, which we and others still living intimate friends of the departed believe will help to characterize this dear man more than his remaining sermon manuscripts. These may have been properly worked out and may clearly demonstrate his "teaching," but they do not convey the power of his delivery. Only seldom did he read his sermons: it was the free delivery that brought out his real genius, although in uneven measure and with unequal force. His feeling for the church, his love for his fellowship, and the deep sorrow which the decay of his church caused him, the fiery pathos of his penitential sermon finds beautiful expression in the following all-encompassing poem, which we present here unabridged inspite of its length because only in this way can we get to know Harder as reformer and penitential preacher, and the way he viewed his time.

To the people, whom I dearly love, because I too belong to them, I feel constrained to dedicate the following song of lamentation. §431(2)

O, how in difficult times, under cross and sorrow, your forefathers held faithfully to the Word of God!

Quietly, in faraway fields, they heard the sweet Word; Yes, in caves and in dark forests they often gathered for worship.

O, how were their songs and prayers full of power! And how all brethren lived in true brotherhood!

Whenever they parted, they pressed each others hands—not to see each other here on earth but in their home beyond.

They lived in uncertainty, for sooner or later they were threatened by enemies and traitors to die a martyr's death.

Yet with the courage of a true witness, they held to the Word of the Lord, and with their own blood they praised their Savior gladly.

O, where are the faith and love of the forefathers? All lies deep in the dust, and there exists a different spirit!

Freedom of worship and much good has come our way undeservedly; O that we would gratefully enjoy these blessings!

Yet love has grown cold because true faith is lacking; instead we have chosen reason and fleshly lusts.

Here and there one discerns an eagerness to pollute the Word of God with wickedness, ridicule and poison.

While one is afraid to express his doubts freely and clearly, one manifests such doubts through hidden, unclear questioning.

Many a weak person is fooled, thinking that it is something great; when he hears a new wisdom, he accepts it with joy.

For he thinks it is great to be equal with the "great," he follows gladly their beckoning and agrees to every foolishness.

Where is the pure walk? Where are faithfulness and honesty? Lies and deception rule the life and in the heart there is avarice and jealousy.

Lies govern business and hypocrisy all of life; debauchery undermines all strength and the enemy rules brazenly and freely.

If someone criticizes such life, one soon hears people blaspheming and saying that the foolish parsons do not understand the spirit of the times.

Surely, such a spirit of lies leads to the abyss of hell. Tremble, sinner, and do not deceive yourself until it is too late!

Would that you would awaken soon to repent of your erring ways! For your scoffing, jesting and laughing will not soften your eternal misery.

You will have to admit that death for you is terrible, and that you could soon become death's victim.

All that which we call human wisdom will come to naught; only he who found the Savior will avoid the judgment.

Whoever did not want the Lord and his cause to govern all of life here on earth, will have to fall prey to God's vengeance in the beyond.

Cease robbing yourself! Become happy in this life and in the beyond, through the blessed child-like faith in the Savior and His Word!

But alas! In spite of the provision of faith, many remain distant from the blessed Lord and in the devil's clutches!

We see people in great numbers walking the broad road that leads to everlasting misery.

O, how people are to be pitied who openly or secretly have given themselves to such ways!

Look at how many horrible pits open their jaws, offering the deceived souls everlasting destruction as a reward!

Whatever you have acquired in the sweat of your brow, or whatever you have extorted from those who are honest, you are sacrificing to the evil one.

Those women and children who have not died in misery are compelled to starve, weeping and wailing over you; but nothing can soften you.

When you come home with raging and cursing, you increase the sorrow, and the poor children seek to flee from your presence.

All this and to wallow in the dirt like bespattered animals you call "pleasure?" Shame on you, drunkards!

You drunkards should tremble as you reflect on how you will feel when the day of judgment breaks upon you with a thousand thunders!

Down below there is not a drop of water to quench your thirst! Torture and everlasting terrors are found in the sea of fire.

You may call yourself givers of good things, but in reality you are not. Consider whether there is not something burning in your bosom and in your face.

O, how do you dare to extend your hand toward such wealth! Do you want to discover when it is too late what heavy curse there rests on such things?

Dear souls, flee the place of scoffers, even though you drink no liquor! Come to Jesus, your Savior, who calls sinners to himself!

Come and you will enjoy a blessedness which you do not know. When you call the loving and sweet Jesus your own Savior.

Ask those souls and the poor who became rich in Jesus; listen to what they have to tell you about the mercies of Jesus.

Ask them how they as the poorest of sinners, hardly daring to look up, have become purified through His blood as children of God.

But also to you, deceived souls, who have fallen deeply, I can tell of Him, and I do so gladly.

You too may come, for His mercy extends to you, the poorest, and with strong Jesus arms He shall take from you the burden.

He shall remove your burden lightly, tear off the shackles of sin, and lead you to high dignity which He has extended to His believers.

You shall become children of God and free from the service of sin; and you shall taste the mercy of God already here on earth.

But you must come with genuine repentance and with a truly broken heart; with tears, fall down at the feet of the One who can and will help you!

Learn to hate the sin which was so destructive in your lives, and resolve in faith to live for Him forever!

But those of you who with joy wish to justify yourself: "I am neither a scoffer nor a drunkard."

Are you pure? Ask your conscience! Examine your life well! Will you not have to confess: "I too am a slave to sin?"

Even things which are practiced seldom and only on certain occasions are recorded by the Lord and close the period of grace.

Take note, you nominal Christians! God's Word in the Bible pronounces a curse on the inner lusts as well as on the evil deeds!

O, when one considers the behavior in this evil time, one does not know where to turn in the face of hatred, quarrels and enmity!

For in all actions and planning people think of themselves only; no one wants to consider the other; everyone honors his own ego only.

Those of you who strive after vain glory should listen: such fame can last only as long as one lives in the body.

How soon the body will decay! It shall fall prey to the worms; beautiful clothes and vanity shall become dry rot, dung, and dust.

Why do you want to exalt yourself, you clod of earth, and then live eternally in shame in the lap of hell?

Come to the One who teaches us meekness and who is humility personified, for without Him you are lost forever!

Listen to one more thing, my dear brothers: after such a long tribulation the Lord has once again blessed our fields far and wide.

Are we grateful for the gifts? Do we show a holy resolve to help the poor who otherwise would suffer want?

Or has avarice closed our hearts against the misery of others, so that we in a vexed and annoyed attitude hardly give a little piece of bread to the poor?

O the fool that you are! And if the whole world belonged to you, your heart will not delight in your treasures when you will suffer everlasting pain.

Flee all avarice and do good in faith as long as you live! Then you will reap there with gladness what you sowed here on earth.

We did not receive the blessings of God to waste them: Woe to him who in vain pleasures devours the goods lent to him!

Many a man drives to the city to sell his wheat, only to drink away what he has gained.

Such people live to our shame and act so brazenly as if there were no God; far and near in the land they bring ridicule upon our good name.

O, our poor, poor young people! I feel sorry for your youth! You live in wantonness, without the fear of God and virtue.

For you think that serious matters do not suit your age; you think that it is the duty of youth to storm, to blaspheme, to jest, and to laugh.

But, you poor young souls, there is no one who is concerned about you; good teaching, discipline, and examples are lacking; who is it that can lead you?

There are many, many old people who agree with your foolishness; instead of holding you back, they themselves live in pleasures and intemperance.

All too often it happens that I saw not long ago: Behold, a man lay drunk and unconscious in the city.

And his child opened to me her heavy heart with weeping. Poor young woman, let your bitter tears flow freely.

But halt! for they charge your father with severe misdeeds. O father, how will you bear such curse? God is very angry.

O, to save yourself and your child you must stop in your sinful course! Let your chains be broken; arise soon from your death!

Cry aloud, you chosen witnesses, cry aloud into each heart; when you remain silent to all things, the stones will surely cry out!

Woe to the sleeping shepherds! Are you, shepherds, asleep? Awake! The wolf is getting his rich loot from among your sheep.

Awake! Not to flee as the cowardly hireling does, but to go to battle, to battle to the blood!

Fight faithfully for the truth! Flee all sin and punish it! Preach the Word of God purely and with clarity! Do not spare my trouble!

Harken gladly to the language of truth! Accept counsel and teachings, for in such important things one can learn much every day.

When you see a soul faltering, put her right in a loving spirit; for we are not lords over souls, but servants, slaves of Christ!

But we are also representatives of Christ who coax and threaten to bring the erring back; but the one who thinks of himself only is a traitor.

Give the souls their right food! Distribute rightly the word of life, not only in a customary fashion on Sundays and in the one place!

Rather, the praise of the Lord should be heard daily, hourly, and everywhere; so that a mustard seed may fall here and there into some heart.

To the one who loves the Word of the Most High, it is strengthening and refreshing to study the Word on long winter evenings!

Call the souls together! They shall come gladly—and begin in Jesus' name to ask for the Lord faithfully!

Those of you who have found the grace of God should form a narrow circle and thus unitedly increase everywhere the Savior's praise.

Seek to win souls for Him; do not care about any prohibition, even though tribulation and persecution threaten you at the beginning!

Jesus himself gave up his life and shed for us His blood; let us also give up both gladly for the benefit of His kingdom's cause.

What can people do to us when we rest in Jesus? The devil cannot do anything against the children of God who are protected by Jesus.

Those who brazenly lift their heads against God and His work, should tremble and fear the Lord's wrath and vengeance!

Children, who are protected by Him, do not lift your hand against them! His sharp sword flashes and his bow is drawn!

Take note of the serious words which the Lord speaks to us now, so that everyone should be ready and not miss his salvation!

God warned us by sending poisonous insects; but oh, He called us in vain; He now sends us death.

The plague that has already killed many threatens everywhere; it suddenly breaks people in full strength like a storm an oak tree.

If you do not want to die in your sins, you must turn back; if you do not want to be suddenly destroyed, you must be converted immediately!

Behold, now is the day of salvation— shall it last until tomorrow? Take hold of the offered grace of God today, you poor maggot!

Brothers and sisters far and near, may God bless you with this poem! I would that it might bring you blessings only and no curse.

Lord of blessings, come and bless this work in your own way, so that I might meet in the beyond many a one who through this was blessed!

O Lord, you often grant the humble the greatest blessings; without you nothing will succeed, no matter how great and beautiful.

To you alone, Lord, be the honor, and to you the fruit of this word! May your honor become glorious and last throughout eternity.

The following poem describes beautifully and forcefully the poet's struggle, faith, hope and victory.

Easter Poem

Who shall roll the stone from the closed tomb for us, when our soul languishes for Jesus, when no pleasure of this earth, when no gift delights the eye which weeps for Him? The heart which has broken with the world, which seeks Jesus and considers Him only, and which has appropriated the forgiveness of sins—who shall roll the heavy stone from his tomb?

O see there! The stone has already disappeared. For Jesus lives; the One who died for you; the one who conquered victoriously the might of the devil—yours is the salvation which Jesus obtained. He died for you, and for you He rose again; for you He then took over heaven, and lovingly He now looks down upon you. Behold, where is the heavy stone?

Who shall roll away the heavy stone of sins? Who shall break in me the power of darkness? And even if I should find in Him forgiveness, who shall make me strong and steady my foot? O, will I not again fall daily and in the end nevertheless be lost? Who shall save me from all sins? Who shall roll away the heavey stone of sins?

O see there! The stone which pressed upon you so heavily is no longer there! After your Savior rose so victoriously, the entire burden, if you believe it, has disappeared. He grants you righteousness, and He imbues you with power to fight and to conquer. Awake, my soul! Rejoice in His peace and see—where is the stone of sins?

Who shall roll away from my breast the stone of the dark cares of life? Who shall still my sorrow? My Easter morning is overcast by sadness which my soul carried with it. Because of worries, grief, sorrow and misery my Good Friday will not end! Who shall help me? Who shall roll with strong hands from my heart this stone of cares?

O see there! Do not despair but believe! The stone is rolled away; it is gone. With courage leave the dust of this earth and trust the sure Word of God: He will not forsake you nor neglect you; He has prepared for you already the wind of Easter. Whatever still weighs upon you, He shall remove away. O see there! Where is the stone of cares?

Who shall roll away the stone from the grave of my hopes: When base ingratitude seeks to hurt me? When I am hated, persecuted, and cursed where I have loved and blessed? When with my childlike, believing trust my hope threatens to cave in? Where shall the eye look up in hope? Who shall roll away the stone of fearful doubts?

But look, when you really think about it, you yourself will have to admit humbly that that over which you grieved so heavily happened to the Lord and Master even more. Did not ingratitude nail Him to the cross? And yet—there is no angel as pure as He is. And you want to further complain about ingratitude? Look up to Him only! This stone is also gone.

O risen Lord! Lead me poor sinner through your death to victory and life! Some day you, conqueror of death, shall roll away the last stone, the sleep of death. Then I shall stand transformed in your light, free from the pain of sin, cares and misery, singing that all of heaven shall resound! Halleluja! Deep down below the stone has rolled away!

His Christian fight as a witness of God, his truthfulness, his great courage and his self-sacrifice for the sake of his Savior are beautifully expressed in the following stanzas:

Should I for fear of men hinder the promptings of the Spirit within me, and not be true witness of Jesus in the face of so much hypocrisy?

Should I keep back the word of the Most High, and not show sinners openly that those who halt between God and the world are heading for Hell?

Should I be a hypocrite before false Christians and flatter unbelieving scoffers for a handful of money and grain, so that I might avoid the anger of men?

Should I call the lukewarm blessed, those who do not manifest spirituality nor power, who are shifting like the wind, and who are the enemies of God?

Should I call those children of God who do not know God nor Christ and who in the bright light of the truth remain blind and dead like a stone?

Who are they then who forsake me and hate me like refuse? Who are they who so bitterly turn their hearts against me?

They are just people who entwine themselves in ropes of sin and death. They are nothing, grass, worthless stubble, a vapor and easily scattered chaff.

No matter how exalted they might be in their own sight, they shall in time know that all their doings are of a short duration on earth and finally lead to Hell.

Who am I then whom they scorn? Is it I then whom they mean? Is it not God who commands me to speak? And is it not His worthy spirit that prompts me?

Whose is the office that I represent here? Who demands that I tell them? Is it not the mouth of the great God who reveals himself to them through me?

O, should my God not protect me when they storm upon me with fierce anger? Will not His favor be my sweet refreshing in all my misery?

You know me well, you protector of men; you know that I am not concerned about the miserable goods nor about the favor of the world, which have captured many.

It is the love of Christ which drives me; it is that which compells me in my spirit to call, to entice, to ask, to plead, and to go after the souls of men.

For this I shall gladly suffer and not avoid the cross, the wrath of men and shame; as long as you, dear God, are not terrible to me in the face of the ridicule of men!

Here is my blood, my poor life! Shall I give it up upon your Word? Yes, Lord, may your will be done to me! If only much fruit will come forth from it!

I know, your Word shall at last be victorious; the dark kingdom will be vanquished: the victory will become manifest soon, even though it is wrought through the blood of the martyrs!

O strengthen me, my powerful Savior, so that in every storm of tribulation my confession may remain firm and joyous! I shall dare it! May God help me!

With this we shall have to be satisfied: We believe that Harder, the man of culture, the witness, the preacher of repentance, the reformer and pastor, has been sufficiently portrayed.

We could relate many more commendable things about him: his sorrows and joys in the family, his deep feeling for the beauties of nature, his glowing patriotism for Russia, especially in the form of his love for the Tsar,[29] also his light humor and his naive, innocent love of life come charmingly to the fore. We no doubt do well to get to know the deceased better and more deeply through his poetry, a man who was sent by God to our communities.

§432

2. At the Present Time (December, 1910)

Due to the limitations of space, we can only give short biographical sketches of the three current specially commissioned elders of the Molotschna congregations.

a) Elder Abram Goerz, Ohrloff, born in 1840 in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna, was a student of the teachers Peter J. Neufeld in Gnadenfeld, Daniel Penner in Schardau, and Isaak Fast (from Gnadenfeld) in the Hebrew Colony of Neu-Berislav (where Goerz's father was overseer of this Jewish colony). Goerz's "last and best teacher" was the former elder, Friedrich Wilhelm Lange, whose school in Schlangendorf he attended. In 1865 he accepted a position as teacher at Hochfeld in the District of Melitopol. After two years he became teacher in Altonau, Molotschna, where he "served with pride and joy" for five years. Because of ill health he was forced to give up his teaching profession and bought a small farm with a treadmill in Altonau. For two years he served as village mayor, for three years as district judge of Halbstadt. Aside from that, he served the district in various commissions where he contributed not a little to the peaceful and just settlement of land-disputes. He was also elected to the commission, which in 1874 had to confer with the Adjutant-General Totleben.

On May 5, 1875, Brother Goerz was elected as minister of the Ohrloff congregation. After the death of Elder Johann Harder, frequently mentioned in this book, he was called to become elder of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt-Neukirchen congregation, and on December 29, 1876, he was ordained by Elder Jakob Toews from Lichtenau in the Neu-Halbstadt Church.

Elder Goerz's important work in school matters was discussed under "Schools" and "School Administration" above. From 1876 and to 1896 he was the representative of the Council of Church Leaders on the school board. "He withdrew for well-known reasons, until, by special request of the Halbstadt District meeting and Council of Church Leaders, he was called back to the same position." Since 1906, he has been the chairman of the Halbstadt Old Peoples' Home. As of a few years ago, Elder Goerz (with two others) is a representative of the Russian Mennonites in matters relating to faith (cf. especially ##291-299; 343; 362; 372-377).

In the 1890s a number of unfortunate incidents amongst his children, that is among his step-children, shook Goerz's official status, and with it the peace of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt-Neukirchen congregation, profoundly and for a long time. As teacher and pastor, he took the responsibilities fully upon himself and in a deeply stirring manner resigned his duties. The majority of the church however wanted to "forgive" him and demanded that the elder should rescind his resignation. Elder Goerz acceded to their wishes and once again took up his duties. This brought the split of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt-Neukirchen congregation into three independent churches: Ohrloff I-Neukirch, Ohrloff II, and Halbstadt, which have already been mentioned twice before. We do not believe it to be our duty to describe this matter in greater detail here, during the course of which many unchristian and sad incidents increased the measure of guilt accruing to the Molotschna "church quarrels." [30]

b) Elder Heinrich Dirks, Gnadenfeld, the missionary, long-time mission-preacher, and leader in matters relating to foreign missions among the Russian Mennonite congregations was fully described above (cf. above: #300 ff).

c) Elder Heinrich Unruh, Halbstadt, for many years chairman of the Molotschna Mennonite Council of Church Leaders, was repeatedly called on to teach and to supervise teaching in the schools. On July 5, 1870, at the age of 26, Br. Unruh (formerly a child of the congregation at Alexanderwohl) was installed into the ministry by Elder Johann Harder in the Halbstadt-Ohrloff Church, and December 1, 1896, he was ordained as elder by Elder Heinrich Dirks of Gnadenfeld, the congregation that had just shortly become independent. For thirteen years (1874-87) he was minister of the Neukirch parish in whose district (in Mariawohl) he lived during those years. He was also village school teacher for thirteen years (7 years in Muntau and 6 years in Mariawohl). As is well-known, he served on the school board for 31 years. For years, Elder Unruh and Elder Goerz have already been entrusted and burdened, above all other Molotschna elders, with these matters. We have not been allowed to say more (cf. above: especially ##362, 373, 374, 377).

§433 3. In order to supplement the material given at various points to describe the Mennonite ministers, we add one more sermon of an elderly spiritual leader here, indeed, one of our most prominent self-taught educators and preachers, who had no other education than that given in one of our better village schools in the 1850s. We were allowed to print the sermon only on the condition of strict anonymity. This sermon, we are convinced, is especially important because it gives clear expression to the understanding and doctrinal stance of the contemporary Russian Mennonite pulpits. The author of this speech (a member of the Mennonite Church) is one of those who wrote out his discourses in full but then delivered them spontaneously. N.B.! Although we are enthusiastic about the combination of the "teacher-preacher," we are nevertheless greatly concerned about the active school teacher as preacher, since it divides his powers. "Economy" in preaching must be his principle!

Sermon delivered on Sunday "Jubilee" 1903
Text: John 16:5-15

"This is a portion from the valedictory address of Jesus to His disciples. It is Christ's concern to inform His dear disciples of His departure to His father, who had sent Him, and to teach and comfort them. But the disciples have a partial understanding of what they are allowed to hear here. They understood enough to know that their dear Lord and Master would leave them and that they would be robbed of His presence. And this made them so sad that they became quite quiet and dumb—they had no further questions. Earlier, before they had understood this much of His words, they had still asked: 'Lord, where are you going?' But now they are depressed. He will leave us, He, in Whose presence we experienced three years of blessed fellowship, the Messiah of our people, but a people who do not want to recognize Him, and whose leaders indeed, constantly increase their enmity toward Him—He will leave us! This knowledge opened such an abyss of perplexity before their eyes that the question of destination seemed to them totally inconsequential. And yet Jesus would have been pleased had His disciples not only asked for the destination, but also for the reason of His departure. But why are you so quiet, dear disciples, He wishes to say, why doesn't someone ask me, since I have encouraged you to question? Why so sorrowful and discouraged? My departure is for you. It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. Oh, what does not all depend upon Christ's going to the Father through pain, death, resurrection, and ascension for us! Had Christ not ascended to the Father, we would have no Comfortor, and thus no comfort, and we would have to die in our sins.

"The disciples did not ask, and so Jesus, without being asked, gives them an important lecture about the fruit and blessing of His ascension. At the time, the disciples did not understand this lecture; they did later, however, after the promised Comforter had come to them, ten days after the ascension of their Lord. It was then that He reminded them of these, and all other words of their Lord and Master, and opened their understanding for them. One of His dear disciples, John, wrote them down, so that they would not be lost, but would be preserved as precious words of Jesus, which we may confront ourselves with today. We hear the lesson of the Lord concerning the work of the Holy Spirit.

"He will discipline the world. He speaks here about discipline. And yet the Lord calls the Holy Spirit a comforter. How does this rhyme? The Lord here distinguishes between His disciples who believe in Him, and the world which does not believe in Him. For His disciples, the Holy Spirit is primarily a comforter in that He continually magnifies and glorifies Christ to them, leads them into all truth, and inflames their hearts with love for Christ, who loved them first. But such comfort by the Holy Spirit does not exclude the disciplining even of Christ's disciples, much more it includes it when they, through a lack of faith, a lack of zeal for sanctification, or even through service to sin become like unto the world and thus a tributary of the prince of this world. Yes, then He disciplines them, and blessed are they, if they allow Him to punish and discipline them! Woe to them if they do not do it! But for the world, that is, for those people who have not yet come to the faith of Christ, those who have not been converted to Him, the work of the Holy Spirit is first of all to discipline, but a discipline in accordance with Hebrews 12:5: 'My son, do not take lightly the discipline of the Lord' etc., in accordance with Revelations 3:19: 'Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten.' He puts you to the question, calls you to account, convicts you of wrong, leads you into a corner, so that one can hardly avoid Him and must admit his guilt. The goal of such discipline is not that of judgment or condemnation, but that of turning one around, of repentance, thus in the final analysis it is for the purpose of a comfort even for the world. To be sure, the success depends upon the person being disciplined, who can give in to God, or kick against the pricks. And if he continues to resist, he can fall prey to the judgment of hardening and condemnation.

"But we must penetrate more deeply into the threefold work of the Holy Spirit. First, He uncovers sin, the sole reason for a person being lost. 'He will judge the world because of sin, since they do not believe in Me.' Yes, my dearly beloved, now that the Son of God has come into the world and accomplished the work of salvation in that He carried our sins and those of the whole world to the cross and removed the handwriting, which was against us; now that He has, as the great High Priest, gone

into the Holy of Holies with His own blood and given us eternal salvation; now that that has taken place and been completed, no person needs to be lost because of his sins and transgressions, however great and heavy they may be. Now there is only one sin which brings condemnation, and that is the sin of which the Holy Spirit attempts to convict us—the sin, Jesus says, of not believing on Me. Not to believe in Jesus means that one does not consider himself bad enough or so lost, that one does not need a Savior, that one merely considers Him to be a ' stopgap. ' Who, should one's own merit, one's own virtue and righteousness in the final analysis not be quite sufficient, will supply that which is lacking through his merit, or that one even makes Him a slave of sin by continuing to live in sin, in the old ' vain walk of our fathers, ' and eases one's conscience by thinking that Jesus did indeed die for the sinners, and will, through His own merit, surely rectify all things. Not to believe in Jesus means: to remain as one is, not to come to repentance, and not to allow oneself to come to a renewal of heart and life. Meanwhile, one may outwardly do all the things which belong to a Christian life; yes, one may even have the appearance of a God-fearing life, make resolutions to change, but inwardly everything remains the same. That is tantamount to not believing in Jesus. That is the sure way to become lost. But because God, as surely as He lives and as surely as His son died for the sins of the world, does not desire the death of the sinner but that he come to repentance and live, His Spirit judges those people who find themselves on this road, continually surrounded by sin, and who will not believe in Jesus. Dear listener, how is it with you? Does the Holy Spirit still discipline you, must He still discipline you for the sin of not believing in Christ? Or has He already been able to lead you to faith in Him and His accomplishment? Has He been able to discipline you in such a way that you have come to the realization that you are a poor, lost sinner? And have you come with your burden, as did Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, to the cross? Did you experience the rolling away of your burden, as he did, when you looked at the cross, and were you able to breathe more easily so that you could sing with Hiller: My sins have been forgiven, and that is a word to live by for a tortured spirit? Behold, then you have been placed into a position of grace, where there is no longer any condemnation.

"With this you have also been granted righteousness. Listen to the second: 'And of righteousness, because I go to the Father.' That is the righteousness of which Paul writes (Romans 4:5): And to one who does not concern himself with works but trust him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness—that righteousness which is reckoned as faith to a repentant sinner. Our own righteousness, 'fig-leaves,' which cannot cover our nakedness—is a filthy and sullied

garment in which we will not be able to stand before God. At best it is something external and lacks the inner aspect, the heart, upon which God alone looks. On the other hand, the righteousness which the Holy Spirit reveals and of which He convicts us as long as we attempt laboriously to cover ourselves with the fig leaves, the patchwork of our own righteousness, that is an imputed though not a foreign righteousness, for He who has achieved it for us is our Savior, who drew so near to us through His incarnation that He became one of us, and with whom we can enter into intimate fellowship, indeed, with whom we can become one. At the same time, this reckoning of Christ's righteousness does not only affect the repentant and believing person outwardly, for there is an inward change of the heart connected with it, and thus a foundation of life is laid in us, which, then, quite naturally, produces a new righteousness of life so that the good tree is recognized by its good fruit, as is He who planted it. That which produces this fruit, this righteousness is no longer the 'stick of the slave driver,' the old task master, the law with its Thou shalt! Thou shalt not!—nor is it the result of being afraid of hell, and surely not the striving to earn heaven and salvation, but it is the love of God which the Holy Spirit has poured in our hearts, it is the loving longing to live for Him who died for us—to become holy as He, who has called us, is holy. This, then, produces the great change of which we read: The old has passed away, behold, all things have become new. Dear listener, has the Holy Spirit been able to exercise his discipline and punishment with regard to the righteousness of God on you? (Finally, one cannot deny anyone a certain striving after righteousness.) Do you already stand on the basis of the Holy Spirit and grace in that regard? Or do you still place your trust in your own carnal flesh? Behold, on this basis, even your striving after righteousness can become sin, in as much as it is a rebellion against that righteousness, which has been revealed by the Holy Spirit and which alone has validity before God.

"On this basis one can never be saved from the curse and lordship of sin. For where sin rules, there you also find the rule of the prince of this world, the prince of darkness. How can we be saved from his lordship? We must come to Jesus, because it is He who has dealt the dealth-blow to our old hereditary sin. And with this we arrive at the third and last work of the Holy Spirit: ' He disciplines the world because of the judgment, for the ruler of this world has been judged. ' He reveals a judgment, in which the matter of our salvation is decided as soon as we desire it. In a disciplining manner, He convinces men that they serve a condemned prince who is no longer able to keep people in his kingdom by force. His voluntary servants and slaves must inevitably fall prey to his and their own destiny (Revelation 20:14-15).

"The prince of this world is judged. How? In that he has received his due. Through sin he was given a right to us—Scripture calls it the power of death—which is based on the justice of God according to the word: on the day you eat of it, you will die. Yes, the strong one depended on God's justice as armor, and tried to maintain it by peace. However, the more powerful one, Jesus our Lord, took his armor. In that the old serpent attacked the sinless one, who did not deserve death, bruised His heel, and put Him to death— and had its head bruised in the process—the power of death which he, the prince of the world, had over man, has been taken. And thus he is judged.

"But, you may ask, if the prince of this world is judged, why does his kingdom still exist? Why is he still active in this world in the children of unbelief? Be patient, my loved ones, for most of his reign is over. We are still in the period of the Holy Spirit, where through the preaching of the Gospel promoted by Him, the latter still executes His threefold ministry in the world. But this time is coming to an end, and with it the world, to the extent to which it is associated with Satan's kingdom and his subjects, as we understand it. The disciplining ministry of the Holy Spirit has this purpose: Those, who have been convincingly instructed by the Holy Spirit that the prince of this world is judged, and who leave his kingdom and serfdom to become co-heirs with Christ, are already depleting Satan's domain. If all were to do this, then the prince of this world would no longer have anyone over whom he could rule here, and no judgment would descend upon humanity. But since, unfortunately, there are so many who do not do this, the judgment must come upon the world, and this judgment will coincide with the judgment of the prince of this world, that is, with the complete execution of this judgment. In the end only two things will remain, a kingdom of God, consisting of a redeemed mankind under their Head, Jesus Christ, and those blessed, the unfallen heavenly spirits—and a pit of fire, which contains Satan and those who belong to him. There is no third—no world with its princes.

"What else shall I say? The application of that what you have heard can be made by each hearer. My loved ones, the Holy Spirit works on each of us. His duty is to discipline first, then to comfort. We all belong to those who are disciplined, but how many of us belong to those who are comforted? Oh, we must become comforted people. We must become such people already now in order to remain steadfast in the storms and temptations of life, but especially in order to be able to approach the great decision of the future with confidence. Why don't you ask yourself: Do I belong to the world, that is, to those people who do not want to hear about this decision, and who will pine away with its approach? Or do I belong to the disciples of Christ whom the Holy Spirit was able to comfort in the midst of the burdens and trials of this life with the fact

that He has proclaimed to you what lies in the future, and the rest which is available to God's people, when He, who has now departed from them will come again to establish the kingdom of our God and of His Christ?

Spirit of Hope lead me
to the inheritance of heaven!
Let my heart rejoice in you
and be blessed in hope.
Amen."

C. New Questions Regarding the Appointment to Spiritual Offices and the Remuneration of Ministers §434

The question raised here, and the way in which one is beginning to attempt to solve it, can be seen from the following document of the Halbstadt congregation, which, on April 8, 1910, was sent to all members by the spiritual leadership: Elder Heinrich Unruh, Minister Gerhard Harder, and Minister Franz Willms.

Report of the Commission to Consider the Creation of a Church Fund and the Dues Necessary Thereto.

"The church council of the Halbstadt congregation, on November 21 of this year, made the following decisions, among others:

"1) In view of the fact that, because of an absence of appropriate candidates with the preparation necessary to meet the increased demands of our time, we have not been able to elect new ministers, and in view of the fact that these demands are justified, the church council has come to the following conclusion: the practice of the church, not to remunerate its ministers in any material way for their work and trouble—followed to this point—combined, as it is, with the neglect of their own material existence, cannot be pursued in the future to the extent that it has been in the past. The increased demands made on the ministers, which make a sound specialized preparation a prerequisite for the office, have had the effect of decreasing the number of possible candidates to a very small number. Added to this is the fact that the material conditions of many do not allow them to dedicate themselves to the onerous and demanding calling of the ministry without the most severe injury to themselves and their family. In view of this, the congregation deems it only right, without in any way breaking with the beautiful institution of our elective and lay ministry, under certain circumstances no longer to expect unremunerated service to the congregation, but to compensate them partially for it.

"2) In view of the fact that there are only a few suitable, theologically trained candidates for the ministry, the congregation deems it very necessary and timely to provide persons, who feel called and

desire to dedicate their lives to the ministry, with the opportunity to acquire a thorough theological education in the kind of institutions that would meet our requirements.

"3) But in order to make it possible also for ministers already in office, as well as other brethren who have an inner desire to preach the Word, to improve their knowledge and their ability to carry out the duties of their office, but who, for various reasons, cannot devote themselves to a lengthy specialized course of studies, the brethren find it desirable and timely to investigate whether or not, in conjunction with other Mennonites, we could not, according to need, institute regular or irregular summer and winter courses in an appropriate manner, and to this end contribute sums of money by the congregations.

"4) In order, perhaps, to alleviate our dearth of ministerial candidates in other ways as well, brethren who desire or feel the call to become ministers should be accorded the opportunity to gain experience in preaching by having the pulpits in our churches opened to them. The brethren gathered here hope that the present, evident shortage of a requisite number of ministerial candidates can be alleviated by these measures without having to sacrifice any essential aspect of the ruling principle of a lay ministry. These resolutions, in order to be put into practice, require that the congregations establish a fund, and to that end the consulting brethren have:

"5) In view of the conditions described above and on the basis of these resolutions, deemed it not only necessary but imperative that the funds be brought together, first as a remuneration for services expected, and, secondly, as a necessary measure for the continued thriving development, indeed existence, of our congregation. But in order to work out the details for collecting such a special fee, it is necessary to create a commission, which would consist of those brethren elected earlier and a few new ones, to establish the ground rules of such a project. The undersigned members of this commission, in order to comply with their charge, hereby inform the congregation of the result of their deliberations, but have also taken it upon themselves to preface their project with the above in the assumption that this resolution will in any case have to be made known to all the brethren, inasmuch as the money to be raised will involve all the members of our church. The amount to be raised by the church during the first year, including the liquidation of the debt of 400 rubles for the renovation of the church, is in the amount of 2,600 rubles. The undersigned have taken it upon themselves to evaluate this figure and find that, according to our view, it can be lowered. For the collection of such a sum would be a considerable burden to the members, and the commission fears that unless the figure is

lowered, the bow will be stretched too tightly too quickly, which could bring undesirable consequences in its wake. At the same time the church dues have already nearly all been paid in for the current year so that some of the need has already been met. The Commission estimates our needs for the next year as follows:

Remuneration to Minister Harder [31]	Rubles	800.00
Upkeep for the church	Approx.	260.00
For instructional courses		200.00
For training purposes		400.00
Payment of debt		400.00
	Total	2,060.00

"Concerning the method of collection for the total sum, the Commission held itself to the already accepted procedure of the first commission, i.e. to charge according to property and earnings; however, by means of a small assessment on each church member to stress the ethical importance of church unity.

Money (25 kopeks per member) from 591 persons	Rubles	147.75
Money (50 kopeks per farm) from 152 farms		76.00
From 27,750 dessiatines (5 kopeks per dessiatine)		1,387.50
From 116,760 (at 30 kopeks per 100 rubles net)		345.25
Salary from 22 serving members		33.50
	Total	1,990.00
Add the already paid church monies	Approx.	210.00
	Rubles	2,200.00

"Accordingly, the above budget could, in the opinion of the Commission, be met, even taking into account the payment of the debt of the 400 rubles and the possibility that some monies might not come in, and a surplus of 400 rubles be left over for other purposes. Since the assistance of students would probably only begin in the second half of the first year, and the courses only begin to be taught after other congregations have joined the project, the commission is convinced that the above level of dues will suffice and therefore recommends their acceptance. Even though the Halbstadt congregation should herewith take the initiative in this direction, the Commission believes that other congregations will follow suit, since the same conditions with regard to the shortage of ministerial candidates are present in most of these as

well. It is true that this project does indeed place considerably greater demands on the willingness of the individual members to sacrifice than has been the case heretofore, especially on the wealthier group. But the profound conviction that the shortage must be alleviated in every place if the congregations are not to experience serious damage, that these sacrifices are necessary for our development, indeed our continued existence, and that they must be brought—this will and must be recognized, even there where it is still not the case. The more that is done in this direction by all the congregations, the more profound will the success of these reforms be and the sooner will they become visible, and the more all-encompassing will the work with regard to preaching and the cure of souls in the congregations and in individuals be accomplished, even amongst those who live in outlying regions. K. Woelk, J. Kornelsen, H. Janzen, J. Willms, H. Willms, J. Penner, B. Neufeld."

Please compare with our explanation above (#11.c and #425 end). We believe that a new life-saving act is beginning here, which will purify the "beautiful" old from its harmful admixture, and will unite it with the "beautiful" new (better—the primitive-apostolic). May God help and bless.

§435

D. The Development of the Spiritual Life of the Church in the Period of 1860 to 1910

This development has already been depicted in detail in the various sections from #260 on, and especially in the present section "K." The foreign missions, the actions taken in matters concerning conscription, the growth of the General Conference (the first regular "General Conference" of the Mennonite congregations, now known as the "General Conference Church," took place—prompted in the first instance by questions regarding the Forestry Service—in January, 1882 in the Neu-Halbstadt (church), the development of the school system, insofar as it was a spiritual concern of the church, the partial theological education (#11,c) and intellectual development of the ministers as well as the beginning of their partial remuneration, the gradual introduction of "Bible conferences" in all congregations (all Molotschna congregations have already introduced them), the charity organizations, the publication organs, the revival and nurture of the spiritual life in individuals by means of preaching and counselling on which we find information especially in the stories of the origins of the new Mennonite churches of Nikolaifeld-Sagradovka and Kalinovo-Memrik, which we hold to be typical, as well as the story of origin of the "Altonau Evangelical Mennonite Church," in the biographies and lectures (i.e., poems) of ministers, especially in the sections: "Heinrich Richert," "Heinrich Epp," "Bernhard Harder," "Isaak Peters" (in America), etc., and in the

following division on the itinerant ministry, which in itself is an important element in the development of the spiritual life of the church, all belong in this period.

Da. The Itinerant Ministry §436

The itinerant ministry, or the "visitation" or "guest-sermon," as we have already stated, was always in existence, as long as the Old-Evangelical (Mennonite) churches existed; at times it was practiced more, at times less systematically and enthusiastically. Russia was no exception: from church to church, from the Old Colony to the Molotschna and vice versa, from South Russia to the Volga, and from there to here, visits were made by elders and ministers, at times initiated by personal concern, at times at the special requests of churches or their leadership. As far as we know, it first came into existence with the creation of a private committee for itinerant ministry in Halbstadt around 1880 through the initiative of Heinrich Letkemann, organized for the purpose of commissioning Bernhard Harder. It was later directed for a long period of time by Heinrich Janz. Then the itinerant ministry was taken over by the General Conference. The itinerant ministers appointed by the society of the majority church group known to us are: Bernhard Harder, Jakob Quiering (son of Elder Quiering from Koeppental, educated at the "Weierhof" and in the Basel Evangelical School for Ministers, presently in America), Gerhard Harder (see above, "Model School at the Secondary School at Halbstadt"), Elder Jakob Gerbrandt and missionary Johann Kroeker (see above, "Siberia"). Elder Heinrich Dirks, as "foreign missions preacher," can also be counted among the itinerant ministers. Furthermore, elders and ministers often travel as delegates of the Council of Church Leaders from this or another group (Old Colony, Molotschna, etc.), and from the General Conference (compare, for example the congregation of Kalinova-Memrik: Visits of Elders Toews, Berg, Goerz, Schartner, and Cornelius Dirks) with regard to such matters as the formation of new churches, election and ordination of ministers and elders, teaching and the edification of churches etc., etc. We are instructed with regard to the method of itinerant preaching in the majority of churches [32] in the following report of Elder Dirks' *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* of 1900:

"The Itinerant Ministry

"The travel report of the itinerant Minister Jakob Gerbrandt of Schingakuli (Ufa) protrays a great field of ministry, in which he visits our Mennonite brothers and sisters and, as occasion demands, serves them with the Word of God, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. The dear brother has been diligent and has spared no effort to reach even those

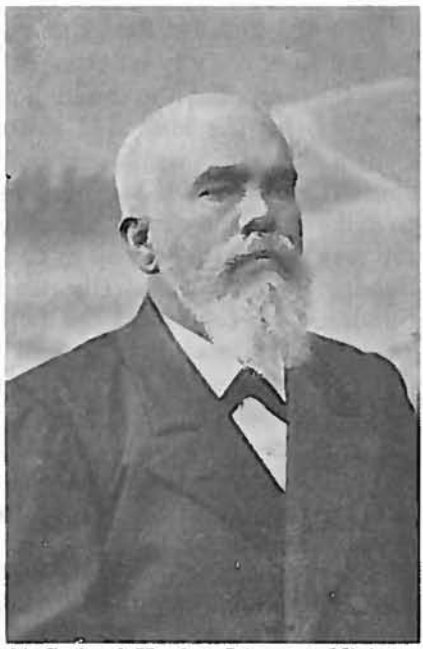
farthest removed. As a result, he often had to be separated from his family for weeks. God protected him and his loved ones and, as it appears, did not allow sickness and death to enter his family circle. The report describes one smaller and five longer journeys. The first, from February 1 to March 8, takes us to the Mennonites at Omsk. They did not have large meetings on the small estates and in the smaller villages; but the meetings were therefore all the more comfortable and often intimate and warm. In one home, where the mother was ill, he was met with a deep longing for salvation. There they experienced the wonderful nearness of Jesus. On the other journeys there were larger meetings because the villages were larger. In one place he encountered some particularly good singing. The youth enjoyed singing. There were also a number of ministers in the same area—from the Molotschna and Chortitza Colonies—who worked diligently to nurture the spiritual life. They are also materially better off there than in many other settlements. They are already considering the building of a church for which preparations have been made.

"The second journey, from May 16-27, takes us, in the company of his wife and children, to Neu-Samara. There, too, the Lord gave blessed days in church, school, and homes, that is, in the various meetings. It was a special treat for the brother to see his aging parents who lived there, and all his brothers and sisters who had come from far and near to be at the wedding of his brother.

"A six week tour, which began on July 9th, takes us far into Siberia. A baptism, an ordination, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper were to take place close to Issil-Kuli. An almost constant rain, which blackened and rotted the cut hay during the haying season, upset everyone. The celebration took place on Sunday, July 20, in Alexandrovka. The dear hosts had made many preparations in order to accommodate and serve all the guests. But the uninterrupted rain reached even into this celebration. There were few guests. Meanwhile, the brother was also to serve in Lusino and Tschukreievo. From there he went on to Karatkansk beyond Omsk. There was a young baptismal candidate who had married a young Russian girl. He was a penitent young man who could well have been baptized. However, he lived in tension with his father, but wished to be reconciled with him. Since the father did not live nearby the decision was reached to wait with the baptism of this young man. The young woman also wished to be baptized. But since the required legal permission for such an act had not yet been obtained, they were forced to postpone this as well. He then made a little side trip to the Crimean Mennonites, who lived approximately 30 versts from Omsk. Upon their request, they too were served the Lord's Supper. Thereupon he travelled from Omsk by steamer



a) Jakob Reimer, Itinerant Minister of the M.B. Church.



b) Gerhard Harder, Itinerant Minister of the Mennonite General Conference.



c) Abram Wall, Itinerant Minister of the M.B. Church.



d) Jakob Quiring, Itinerant Minister of the Mennonite General Conference.

to visit the so-called Pavlodar and Barnaul settlement. . . . There was a great deal of activity on these settlements. For the short summer period was the only time to build homes, with the limited means at their disposal, for the long cold winter. Whoever could, made clay bricks. Others plowed the sod loose from the meadow, stacked it into thick walls covered on the inside and outside with a clay prepared for this purpose, to make excellent winter homes for the settlers. Unfortunately, the wells are very deep, at places up to 20 fathoms deep and more. The meeting on Sunday in the Barnaul District was very well attended. The following Sunday a celebration of the Lord's Supper took place in Musdu-Kuli. This meeting was not as well attended, partially because the long awaited ' assistance ' from the South had come. For a number of settlers this demanded a lengthy journey, which they could not well postpone. In the meantime a number of smaller meetings and burials of children took place. The graveyards are new there but not empty. Many grave-mounds tell the story that death enters there as well, destroys plans and creates gaps in many a family. In Rebrovka, two, and in Issil-Kuli three people were added to the congregation by baptism. In both places they also gathered around the Lord's Table. On the 18th of August they were homeward bound.

"In October Br. Gerbrandt followed a call of Elder Johann Bergmann to visit the Orenburg settlement. To begin with, a two day Bible conference was held. This was something new, but they accepted it sympathetically. The meetings at the Tscharno-Osernoie (1st day) and at the Stepanovka church (2nd day) were very well attended, as were the following fourteen meetings in the various villages of the Molotschna and Old Colony settlements. A little excursion to our Samara settlers was also made.

"From November 28 to December 10 a journey was undertaken to Jelanskaia on the river Bielaia. A devotional service in the school, a Bible conference, a Mission festival, which brought in a good amount of money for the purpose of foreign missions, and a celebration of the Lord's Supper were conducted. Approximately 20-25 families live there. Unfortunately they are so far removed from the main road, that guest ministers only seldom visit them. They love God's Word and would be happy to receive more visitors bringing the Word. Unfortunately, they have themselves to blame for the fact that a partisan spirit is hindering their common edification.

"The report concludes with a journey from January 15-26, 1909, made in the company of a Br. P. Enns from Jukala. The brethren travelled to the Alexandertal Church in Old Samara. The reporter sees a special blessing in the fact that the Lord sent them out in 'twos.' They were

able to strengthen one another in their common work and prayers, and to consult with each other and be edified together. The Lord granted them the opportunity to serve immortal redeemed souls in a number of meetings held in schools and private homes. They also had the opportunity to talk about the Great Physician and point to Him, whose greatest joy is a repentent sinner, in private conversations.

"Br. Gerbrandt's area of service is large. The work he does is also great. The settlers have come from various districts with various insights, habits, and church customs. If possible, to be 'all' in Christ to all these people is not easy. If there are ministers present, he can consult with them. These have often prepared the soil. Where this is not the case, it can at times be even more difficult to find the right solution and be a blessing to them. It is important that we pray for him as often as possible."

Thus far the report concerning Br. Gerbrant's activity. What follows has been reported about his own work by the above-named Br. Gerhard Harder. The honorable Br. Dirks writes in regard to this report that the principles and methods of the work of the itinerant minister expressed here are exactly the same as his own.

Minister Harder writes:

"From my own work as itinerant minister I would like to add the following: From October 5-7, 1908, I attended a very blessed Bible conference in the Mennonite church at Berdiansk. For three days we looked at Golgatha and examined the meaning of Christ's death: a) for God (day one), b) for the world (day 2), and c) for the believers (day 3). We were marvelously moved. Repeatedly we saw new and beautiful things from the best among the children of men. In such days it is so easy to sing: ' Your name and Your cross shine continually in my heart, for that I am glad. ' This continues to have an effect even after one has returned to his work. This was my experience with regard to the sermons and house visitations in a number of villages I visited after having left Berdiansk. The work was done in fellowship with loving ministers and brethren in the respective villages. Following that, I made a visit to the Crimea. The immediate occasion for this was an invitation to be actively involved in the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Karassan Mennonite Church elder's service. It was a rare and beautiful celebration. A joyous note of praise and thanksgiving pervaded the whole celebration. The speakers, in union with the celebrant and his congregation, jointly praised God, Who, after so many difficult experiences in the congregation and in its leadership, had granted them so many years filled with opportunities to build themselves in quietness. To be sure, they also remembered human weaknesses and shortcomings,

but with the humble desire that the loving God would give grace that they would, in the future, have a greater understanding for the building of His Kingdom and a greater willingness to do His will. The activities of a joyously-moved church manifested thanks to God and their beloved elder, who had served them so many years. The well-attended morning and afternoon church services, the beautiful songs of the well-rehearsed choir, the love meal in the shed of a brother decorated for the occasion, the many and often very practical gifts, the many hearty greetings accompanied with warm handshakes, and the many significant friendly glances all added to the right festive spirit. These all demonstrated to the celebrant and his loving wife that love and gratefulness were not yet dead. May the elder's home in Karassan, in its golden evening glow, continue to be a drawing point, and through Christ's grace be a place of many blessings for questioning and depressed souls, as well as for those who have a longing for an intimate fellowship with the Head and His members on earth.

"Time and health, still permitted me to visit various Mennonite villages in the Crimea. I was able to preach often and make many house visitations, as a result of which I came into contact with various people. In this way I learned to know God's children and those who wanted to become children of God. How happy in sorrow and how patient in tribulation was that poor old mother who suffered pain by day and night! The Lord Jesus knows how to comfort her in a marvelous manner and how to increase her faith. A few houses further an altogether different atmosphere pervades the air. Envy, discord, and every evil thing lives there. The poor children hear only bitter accusations here which father and mother heap on each other, accusations which at times lead to physical violence. There one sees the great difference between those who are with Jesus and those who are without Him.

"I like to think back on one of the smaller journeys to Taschtschenak in the district of Melitopol. The loving Brother Fritz Oetzbach, who is now in the presence of God, also came there. Together we served on the Sunday morning and afternoon services. In between, the brother shared from the limitless well of his experiences. When one listened to this, in outward appearance, insignificant man, it seemed as though he grew in stature. If he spoke of himself it was only done to glorify Jesus, Whose power was so gloriously revealed in the praise of his tongue."

L.
CONCLUSION

XLV.

§437 a) In various places of our book we have repeatedly pointed to a "Closing Chapter." We conceived of it as a very extensive one, but it has now to be relatively short: first, because our strength, due to ill health, has come to an end; secondly, because the number of pages in this book have far exceeded the limit initially set; and thirdly, because that which we wanted to say in a coherent manner in a closing chapter, has already been stated "along-the-way" in the various chapters of this book. The Mennonite relationship to the state and society as well as to other Christian confessions, has been delineated in the sections dealing with "Customs and Character" etc., "Non-Resistance and Emigration," "Schoolmatters" etc. The reciprocal relationship of the older Mennonite churches and the "Mennonite Brethren churches," and their mutual "Plus and Minus" (#259) is seen in #71; 136,v; 137; 197 and 198; and the footnotes in *#420.* At the same time, this relationship is expressed indirectly or directly in the biographies of Heinrich Richert, Heinrich Epp, Bernhard Harder, and other Mennonite men, in the document dealing with the newest action of the Halbstadt congregation (#434), in the penultimate section dealing with the "Itinerant Ministry," and also in the section dealing with "Foreign Missions." In regard to the relationship of the two main divisions of the Russian Mennonites to each other, we want to confirm what one of the Mennonite brothers said concerning the spiritual development of the Mennonite churches less than two years ago. The "brother" in question, a very respected personality in both church groups, had, as a mature person and a serious Christian, left the Mennonite Church and gone over to the "Mennonite Brethren Church" some 25 years ago. While he was fully convinced of the necessity for the establishment of the M.B. Church and while his joining with it was an act of obedience in agreement with his clear personal understanding taken for his own spiritual safety and growth, he neverthless found that the spiritual life among our Russian Mennonites developed differently than he had at first envisioned. The spiritual growth and improvement, as far as he knows it, is relatively stronger in the Mennonite Church than in the Mennonite Brethren Church with all its advantages. In particular, he stressed that it was a miracle of God's grace that in a large district known to him, he could think of no Mennonite minister whom he does not consider a believer. At the same time he pointed to the important fact that the churches of this district,

consisting mainly of unbelievers, call mainly dedicated Christians into the ministry. If someone is called who is not a true believer, he "becomes a Christian out of fear, in view of the holy profession which is his." Such evaluations of the Mennonite churches have come to us from a number of important "Mennonite Brethren."

§438 b) The M.B. Church is well characterized in its own reports, minutes, etc., as seen in Part I, particularly in #208-258: Orthodoxy, the principle of a heart-felt faith in accordance with their confession and in keeping with their understanding [1] as set down in 1865 ("June Minutes—Reform," #121; 191ff)—and an interest in their own development, all in the same manner and administrative method, as it became their characteristic rule and habit in the second, the most important period of their development from 1865 to 1872 (##199-207). All the mentioned reports are often flat and monotonous; seldom does a fresh wind blow the sails (as for example, in the flourishing matter of foreign missions). We had to present these reports in spite of this and because only in this way could reality and impartiality come into its own. With regard to the "Alliance" movement, the M.B. Church as a body, has rather been reactionary. What did take place in this regard was the personal work of men from a small opposition group who could not be forced out of the fellowship, although attempts were made to do so. (However, two of the most influential official and conservative brethren of the M.B. Church recently expressed the thought that "love needs to be the new way" in this matter as well. That is a new dawn with salvation under its wings!) As in regard to the Alliance movement, and almost to the same extent, the work accomplished in the matter of Bible conferences has been done on a private basis. The reintroduction of the old evangelical Mennonite "Bible-courses" since the seventies, however, must be credited to the M.B. Church as a body, as well as to the preaching of the Word: evangelism, sanctification, and the teaching-sermon in this fellowship are characterized by power. They not only have relatively many educationally and theologically trained ministers (the first Mennonite in Russia with a full theological university training stands in their midst) and a small force of excellent speakers, but also a great number of speakers drawn from the ranks of the people as called and ordained ministers and elders, who are able to preach the Word powerfully, yet with understanding and simplicity. [2] Many of the M.B. Church members in Russia stand at the forefront in matters relating to school, welfare, and publications; but not as representatives of their church. Only the old folk's home in Rueckenau, [3] a small but good piece of work, is due to their initiative as a body (see above: #385). As far as institutions are concerned, only the secondary school at Nikolaievka-

Ignatievo[4] formally belongs to the M.B. Church, and we are happy that there is so little "separatism" in this matter! The M.B. Church is undisputedly one of the "progressive churches" to this day, and we maintain what we have said in #71, #243,c and #232,b; many of their members are spiritually and intellectually prominent, active men in the Mennonite society; but the "growth in grace" has been relatively slower in the M.B. Church than in the older Mennonite groups (as our witness in a previous paragraph stated). Here, too, one needs to consider the words of Jesus concerning the "last" and the "first." We believe that the main error of the Mennonite Brethren Church is—in relationship to the grace received—a lack of humility and unsparing self-judgment, as well as a certain reluctance to acknowledge the good aspects, both old and new, in the Mennonite churches. Church discipline and the Christian walk of many members of their fellowship do not correspond with the ideal they talked about in their "Letter of Secession" and other documents which they have sent to the old church since 1860. A major cause for the relative weakness of the M.B. Church are those members, who, as a recently deceased "Mennonite brother" said, are "living buried ones" (in opposition to Romans 6:4-11) and those who, as a still living "brother" says, are "baptized carnality." Their "conversion" consists only of a religious stimulation or excitement, and the act of baptism merely a transfer of names from one church register to another (insofar as they already were members of another church). And yet they must be considered to be believers. Spiritually speaking, however, they are certainly no less damaging than the dull, carnal element—the world of the world—the totally dead members of the Mennonite Church, who are afraid of, and hate, all intensive Christianity, who hatefully call their own church brother, yea, their own minister, a "Baptist," a "Separatist," a "Propagandist," as soon as he shows them the consequences of their carnal life style and confronts them with the demands of their evangelical Mennonite confession. They welcome every obstacle to an energetic evangelical life. We consider the sincere and seriously seeking members of the older churches, who are "not as yet saved" but whom we gladly call "brethren of hope," less negative than the "living buried" members of the M.B. Church and the "carnal element" of the Mennonite Church.

§439 c) Other members of the M.B. Church, in my opinion no less outstanding and upright than the above-mentioned "Mennonite brother," express themselves quite differently with regard to the spiritual condition of the Mennonite Church. The honorable and loving "minister on the day of Jubilate," to whom we presented both the positive and negative evaluations, could not completely share the first and tended

much more in the direction of anxious forebodings and fears. Nor did he repudiate the assertions of another "brother" that the Russian Mennonite proclamation of the Gospel, as well as its religious instruction (cf. above #364,2)—and that more or less in every camp—was threatened by a refined rationalism. Many other "Mennonite brothers"—self-taught as well as educated men, old as well as young—from the ranks of the spiritual leaders as well as from the membership, share the anxieties of their senior colleagues, as expressed in *#364* (2), and of the "minister on the day of Jubilate." To a certain extent, both the optimists and pessimists will be right: our Russian Mennonite community will, in all its parts, remain as unaffected by the unhealthy criticism,[5] rationalism, and neology, etc., etc., as all the other parts of the Christian Church, even the "Free" or "Brethren Churches." For years the author has tended in the direction of the point of view of the optimists (of those who see the best in everything, especially in view of such highly worthy men as H. Richert, B. Harder, H. Epp, Isaak Peters, etc.).

If, without naming names, we present the profound judgments of persons whom we love and hold in high regard here, we know full-well that we, before our conscience and the entire community, take the responsibility for them completely upon ourselves. What we have written in the last sections of the book (indeed, in a large part of the book) is not "history"; it is a statement of the subjective viewpoints of a contemporary; it is made up of "chronicle" and "memoirs" which will have to await the objective analysis of future historians. Nevertheless, the contemporary who reads these accounts will react to them according to his personal understanding or according to his sympathies and antipathies. Here, too, we desired to allow "both sides" to speak.

As a personal note, we would also like to direct attention to a weakness in our "Mennonite" sister churches, and that is the circumstance that many of their members—indeed important members, whom we recognize as decided believers and "brothers" in terms of the Holy Scriptures, and whom we honor and love—more or less lose their impartiality, the ability to see things clearly, and their unfeigned brotherly love wherever "Separatists," "Mennonite Brethren," and "Evangelical Mennonite Brethren" are concerned. They are as unable to forget the (presumed and real) insults their church suffered fifty years ago, and in more recent times, as the (real and presumed) errors of the "Separatists." This is as deplorable as the M.B. Church's lack of self-judgment and humility which we have ascribed to her. "Those who are spiritual" in all groups should judge, condemn, and put off the one as well as the other weakness (cf. I Cor. 3:3, 4).

§440 d) The author, who is well able to recall the conditions obtaining some 40-50 years ago, cannot agree with the repeated assertion that the general moral level is caught up in a precipitate decline. Conditions may well be in a sorry state in some places; in some areas conditions may even be worse than they were some time ago; on the whole, however, we do not believe the above to be the case. One need only remember the complaints and accusations of the Minister Peter Hildebrand, of the *Kleine Gemeinde*, of the "secessionists," of Elder Lenzmann, of Minister Bernhard Harder, and of Elders Bernhard Fast and Johann Harder, etc., etc.! Another assertion, however, that a terrible materialism, passionate, indeed wild striving to become rich is spreading more widely and deeply among us, is true. It is also true that a great number of confessing believers from all church groups participate in ever greater numbers in this wild chase. As a consequence, financial and—associated with this—the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of the "children of God" belong to the sad occurrences of everyday life (I Tim. 6:9).

§441 e) What means, then, are necessary to turn us from these dangers: the attack upon the sacred ancient evangelical treasure of the faith, the decline (or at least the low state) of morality, the materialism and its inevitably associated worldliness? First, we should like to refer the reader back to what we said in #364 (2) in regard to the "threatening shadows" and then express the same idea in a purely spiritual and ecclesiastical sense as follows: we need a "new party," and "new alliance!" Nothing formulated! Nothing organized! We have more than enough of that. We mean an ideal spiritual union of all those (from all shades and groups of Mennonites) "who love our Lord Jesus Christ immovably," undeterred and unconstrained by artificially contorted dogmas such as those of the pseudo-scientific critics, who are without piety and without faith; a union of all those who simply, clearly, and essentially uniformly recognize and confess Jesus Christ as we find Him in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles and in all the old confessional writings of the Anabaptists as well as in the present confessions of the Russian, West Prussian, South German, Swiss, and American churches of the Old Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood. We desire union of those who love Jesus and have faith in Christ without regard to differences of opinion relating to church buildings, baptism, etc., and without having to "quarrel" with, to force, insult, or despise one another (even though one must openly and honestly debate the issues, while at the same time, in love and forbearance, allowing "everyone to be sure of his own conviction"); a union for a common battle against unbelief, enslavement to mammon, and secularization! In order "that Christ be preached" and accorded honor, and that His name, as that of our Heavenly Father, be hallowed amongst us and through us.

Nor do we believe that there is any other way, not even through the best conceived and most sincerely intentioned creations of congregations and societies, whereby the "unity of the children of God" will come into being in this world and period of waiting than through "the love which is the greatest" of all spiritual gifts. The long history of the total church of Christ teaches us that. We do not wish to say anything more here with regard to the endlessly controversial issue of the right and necessity to establish new "churches of believers," especially on Mennonite soil. The same applies here: Everyone must be sure of his opinion; why do you judge your brother for whom Christ died; and, we shall all be revealed before the judgment seat of Christ. Until the Great Shepherd Himself shall come to care for His flock, the building of God's kingdom within the now already divided and damaged church of Christ— we are profoundly convinced—will take place in a two-fold fashion: in the large church bodies, through individual and groups of believers, and in the "congregations of believers" (which we are judging, as stated in #50, footnote 2). One should compare (we name only a few of those best known to us) Thomas a Kempis, Bishop Sailer,[6] Christoph von Schmidt, Martin Boos (Roman Catholics); Johannes Arndt, Philip Jakob Spener, August Herman Francke, Richard Baxter, Hofacker, Wuest (larger Protestant denominations) and Menno, Zinzendorf (we are not dealing with the question of baptism here), Wesley, Carey, Spurgeon, George Mueller (founders and promoters of "congregations of believers"). Who of us would wish to deny that this or that member of this group of men was not sent by God to carry out His work of salvation in a time of darkness?! "Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy" (according to the gifts and understanding granted them). Everything that has been considered "right" and "perfect" with regard to these questions has, until now, always proven itself to have been only "relative."

§442 f) Of the formal means used to combat these threatening dangers—aside from the preaching of the Word, Bible study (Bible conferences, courses: #11,c and 434), itinerant ministry, the cure of souls, and church discipline, as well as the possible improvement of the spiritual office (#438)—the most important appears to us to be the never failing, constantly growing care for the school, and most of all for the village school. It is in this area, above all others, that we should pull ourselves together for the holy work yet to be done in such a manner as though nothing has as yet been accomplished! Here, too, all honest lovers of Jesus and true Christians should unitedly mobilize their strength in order, through an intimate bond of unity and a stream of enthusiasm, to motivate our teachers, ministers, spiritual and civil communities and institutions, wealthy benefactors and the educated in society, to work unitedly and untiringly on behalf of the cradle of our culture and our

religion—the elementary schools, and then on behalf of our entire school system. Above all, our ministers, who, thank God, today stand as a body on the foundation of faith in Christ, must shoulder the great task. Exercising all their juridical rights as well as their juridical and spiritual obligations in a broad and loyal adaptation to the circumstances (cf. *#377, 3*), they must shoulder the task as individuals, as executive committees, as commissions, as councils, and as members of the General Mennonite Conference. In all religio-ethical, pedagogical, didactic, and hygienic [7] matters the fundamental principle should be: (only!) the best is good enough for our elementary schools! In 1876 the Mennonite deputies to St. Petersburg declared that our schools should be formed in such a way that they would be spiritual preparatory schools for the fellowship (above #344). But in this regard, the elementary school, the "Volksschule," (people's school) in its most encompassing meaning, is the decisive school since our fellowship, in all its various parts, is thoroughly a "people's church." And if the "people," the essential sovereigns in our ecclesiastical affairs, have theologically and morally-sound principles, they will never tolerate an unsound theology or sermon from the pulpit.

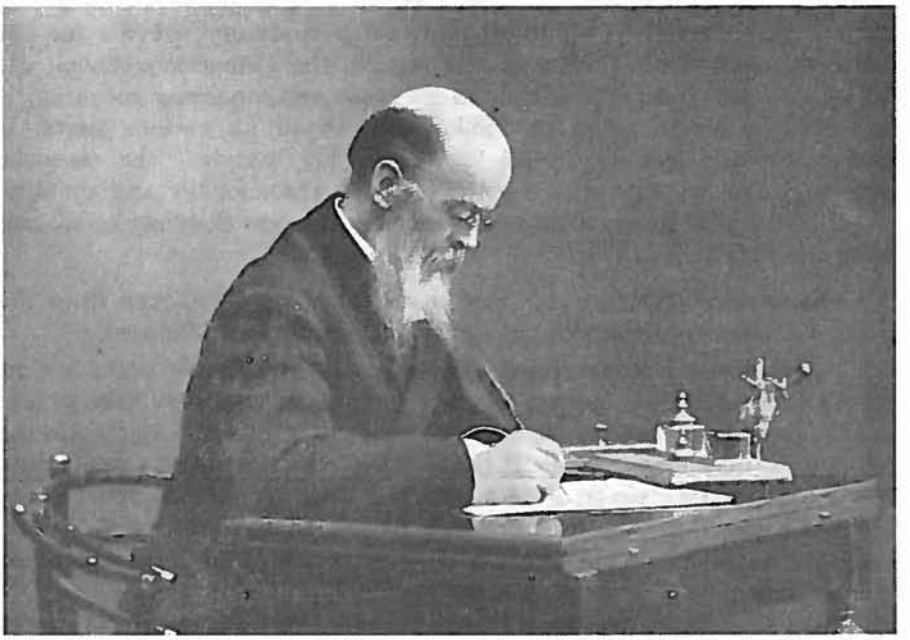
§443 We wish to conclude this first part with a word—spoken from the depths of our soul—from the pen of a Swiss-American Mennonite.

"And finally I would like to give a personal testimony and say that all the children of God, no matter what their names, are very dear to me; and even though some of them, with whom I previously had intimate fellowship, may have distanced themselves from me because our points of view may have come to differ somewhat, I for my part do not feel any sense of separation. And the Lord was able to fill my measure of life and compassion for the unregenerate world even more, praise be to His great Name! Amen."

May God grant that such Christ-like emotions would fill the hearts of all those who love Jesus and believe in Christ within our fellowship! Then the mutual relationship of all believers amongst us and the relationship of our body to all the other Christian churches, as well as to the state, society, and mankind (I Tim. 2:4-6; Titus 2:11), would be a holy and saving one. Then we would surely be victorious over all the threatening shadows and all the anti-Christian forces, until He, our highly-praised Lord, comes to establish His kingdom.

In this attitude of mind we lay down the pen for this work with the prayerful desire:

May Our
Old Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood
live, grow, and prosper,
"until He comes!"



a) Minister P. M. Friesen (b.1849). Author of the *Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia*, teacher and principal of the Halbstadt Secondary School, 1873-1886.

Notes

FOOTNOTES

A.
THE ORIGINS OF THE MENNONITE MOVEMENT

1 The following parentheses [. . .] are used to indicate the author's remarks within the text. Wherever anything is deleted from a document this is indicated by. . . . All emphases derive from the author.

2 He was born in southern France and died around 1200.

3 In the same way that Luther and his allies at first regarded Carlstadt, Thomas Muentzer and the other fanatics who later opposed him as "evangelical preachers." It has ever been thus, for already at the time of the exodus from Egypt "much rabble" tagged along, later causing a great deal of misery and damage. Menno, however, never allowed himself to be deceived by these, not even by those blood-relatives such as David Joris.

4 1515 or 1516. According to the Dutch Mennonite professor de Hoop Scheffer, Menno was born in 1492 and died in January 1559 at the age of 66.

5 Pronounced Sneider.

6 A sect which also required baptism upon confession of faith but was caught up in many wild and brutal errors: they wanted to erect Christ's kingdom by means of the sword, murder, and revolution; they practiced polygamy and installed a "King David of Zion," that is, in the city of Muenster (in Westphalia, northwestern Germany, close to the Dutch border). They were named the "Muensterite sect" or Muensterite Anabaptists after the city of that name.

7 Laws, orders.

8 The true proof of God's calling to the position of bishop or of the shepherd of souls!

9 That is, he was the one who had earlier enlightened them with regard to the errors of the Roman Catholic Church.

10 Still from the pulpit of his Roman Catholic church.

11 The year of his baptism.

12 Compare further: Waldensians and "Churches under the Cross" in Deknatel.

13 This was a deputation from the oppressed "quiet" Anabaptist congregations (as they are called in order to differentiate them from those of Muenster. Compare further: Waldensians). These deputies came to Menno at various times and in various numbers (6, 7, 8) with their concerns.

14 With regard to Menno's education, cf. Deknatel's and Mosheim's assessments, and those of others.

15 Compare further: Waldensians.

16 In the brotherhood or "church under the cross" which had called him to be its bishop.

17 Compare further: Deknatel, "Menno's Sphere of Activity."

18 The greatest miracle of all!

19 This is the attitude of a true shepherd and the heart of a true priest, and it can only be created in those servants who have been called by Him, who are truly His, and are His faithful servants.

20 See under: Holland Mennonites, "Ministers."

21 Government of Emperor Karl V. through 1555, and thereafter the government of his even more fanatic son Phillip II of Spain.

22 Deceased since then.

23 Entered the ministry before Menno did and outlived him. He was far more intolerant than Menno. He and Leonhard Bouvens influenced him in this direction: intolerance and vigorous discipline especially in the matter of a strict ban (particularly, as Menno became old and sickly and no longer was able to use his erstwhile authority). On his deathbed, it is said Menno regretted his harshness. Dirk's brother, Obbe Phillips, ordained Menno as well as Dirk as bishop or elder. At a later date Obbe withdrew from the evangelical-Anabaptist movement: some say he returned to Roman Catholicism; others say he went into a silent seclusion and was opposed to any kind of Christian evangelization or missionary effort: everyone is to serve God in silence and in isolation with only those closest to him. Never did Menno refer to his formal consecration (the laying on of hands), neither as a priest (presbyter) of the Roman Church, nor the rite performed by O. Phillips. See #53c: "ordination of elders". (Neither did the Lutherans nor the Reformed reformers refer to their ordination by the Roman Church.)

24 Mosheim in his church history says he had assembled an "immense number of churches" in the above mentioned areas, so that he became the "Father and general bishop of all Anabaptists." (Ramseyer)

25 See below: "Persecutions."

26 The Netherlands.

27 These are the remnant of "Hutterite" Brethren who migrated to Russia, also known in our circles as "Bearded Mennonites" who more recently lived in the colony Hutterthal and Johannesruh near Melitopol, and several other localities. In 1874 they moved to America where they in part set up their preferred "Bruderhoefe." Deknatel mentions them in one of his annotations, making reference to a "Bruderhof in Maehren."

28 Their old handwritten chronicle asserts throughout that they were Waldensians. (Privy councellor Alexander Klaus: "Our Colonies.") Also see: III "Jacob Hutter" under "Persecutions" and X "Addendum," "Cornelius Warkentin."

29 Also compare XIV, "M.B. Church," "Foundation Document," Jan. 6, 1860; regarding mode of baptism, XX, "Baptism in the M.B. Church."

30 The expression "Person" which is not in harmony when applied to the Trinity, reads as follows: ". . . These three names and works and powers, namely the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, whom the early church fathers called three persons intending to identify them as three Godly beings . . ."

31 Wuerttemberg, the Black Forest. Nine hundred persons were executed for their faith in a similar manner in about ten years.

32 Oar-driven ships where galley slaves were often chained to their seats until they died.

33 Archduke of Austria, King of Bohemia, etc., later the German Emperor Ferdinand I.

34 The Anabaptists in Moravia later experienced a long period of peace and prosperity, from about the 50s to the 90s of the 16th century. From then on, however, things went worse for them, especially after the Thirty Years' War; in the decade of the 60s of the 18th century the last remnants were ruthlessly forced to become Catholic in Moravia as in Hungary; the small group that remained in Transylvania was then able to escape to Wyschinka.

35 That is, still before Menno's baptism (1536).

36 Cf. Menno's **Withdrawal from the Catholic Church.**

37 Johann Claassen.

38 All Anabaptists, even Menno, were called "Baptists" at that time. Cf. I,a.

39 Was that not in fact a prophetic allegory with regard to the attempt to eradicate true Christianity through ruthless means as a last resort?

40 We report this passage, paraphrased and somewhat abbreviated, from Johannes Horsch, **Kurzgefasste Geschichte der Mennoniten-Gemeinden,** and express our gratitude to brother Horsch for permission to do so.

B.
THE DUTCH-PRUSSIAN ANABAPTISTS OR MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD

1 Already after Menno's death, in 1578. It was William III, also a member of the House of Orange, who granted the English Baptists and all the other evangelical dissenters complete religious liberty in the year 1688.

2 All of them named after their place of origin. The Flemish are also called "Danziger" (those from Danzig).

3 The original fathers of the Mennonites in Gnadenfeld and Alexanderwohl in Molotschna, Russia. Cf. #45 and 136, i.

4 Menno is supposed to have said the following on his deathbed (according to v. d. Smissen and tradition in general): "How sorry I am that I gave my consent to it" (the severe resolutions of the "excommunicators"). The profound hurt of having to experience all of this in his congregation—beloved above all else (in a nearly idolatrous manner)—was a nail in his coffin.

5 The teaching of the unity of God in opposition to the Trinity.

6 The first truly scholarly and critically objective study to come out of the circle of truly believing Mennonites seems to us to be that of Prof. C. H. Wedel.

7 But which he still considered to be a "dipping into" or immersion in water. Ramseyer, **Histoire des Baptistes.**

8 Oldenbarneveldt was executed in 1619 and Hugo Grotious only escaped life-long imprisonment through flight.

9 This discovery, coming from Meusel, Zoeckler, Herzog, **et al.** in contrast to Menno's **Complete Works,** was new even to the author. In the Russian Mennonite circles everyone was of a contrary opinion. "Free grace" is also the main emphasis in Menno's "Withdrawal from the Catholic Church" and his treatise "Concerning Faith."

10 The term derives from their "remonstrance," opposition to the resolutions of the overly-strict Calvinist majority of the Dutch Reformed Church, expressed in the Reformed Confession of Dortrecht of 1618.

11 The word "orthodox" means adhering to the right or correct faith, "praising (God) correctly."

12 This "Confession of Faith of the Mennonites or Anabaptists" of Ris, approved by the Amsterdam congregation "Zur Sonne' and many other Dutch congregations in 1773, should probably by called the quintessence of the truly believing Mennonite groups: undoubtedly orthodox, it is markedly irenic and tolerant, correcting Menno's and Dirk Philips' severity in a mild and friendly manner. The "church," according to Ris, is not limited to one or even only to our fellowship, but encompasses all believers.

13 The congregation nevertheless has absolute freedom of choice, and (at least in many if not in all congregations) the sisters also may vote.

14 The author would advise that the two-year pedagogical courses in the Secondary School in Halbstadt and Chortitza be extended one or two more years, that is, that the school be reorganized into a seminary and a teacher training school and especially that the program of religious instruction be enlarged, instead of building the very controversial projected seminary (which is the object of disagreement among the various groups of Russian Mennonites). The best possibly educated religion and elementary school teacher, who could constantly improve his spiritual and theological training in the extended Bible courses recommended above, would, in our opinion, also generally be the best qualified minister for our congregations. A seminary is not yet feasible, a fact clearly demonstrated by the quarrels and misunderstandings bordering on the monstrous arising from this issue, above all not one with such a generally low academic program as had been planned;

if we want to opt for a professional theological training, then let us have a good one! Besides good elementary and high schools, and teacher training centers, we need courses that will give us a profounder understanding of the Bible for the general church worker—but only for them. Above all the uninhibited free election of our ministers must never be tampered with. N.B.: Bethel College in America is more a school for training teachers than ministers! Compare below #13, n, footnote: "German Baptist Brethren," theological training.

15 Compare #5, h, and "Dortrecht Mennonite Confession of Faith," article 5,c.

16 We can only touch on the Mennonites, i.e., Anabaptists of Switzerland (where in Zurich in 1525 they laid the historical foundation of all Mennonites in existence today—the Zurich fellowship is the source of all these congregations) and Southern Germany here. In the section entitled "statistics" below, we present a short schematic-characteristic overview of these groups.

17 The Amish Mennonites in Switzerland, South Germany, and America were named after him.

18 Cf. Meusel, "Boehmisch-Maehrische Bruder" in **Kirchliches Handlexikon**, Ramseyer and others.

19 With regard to communion, among other things, they vacillated considerably: from the substantiation of the Roman Catholic Church to the rationalistic interpretation of Zwingli.

20 The Lutheran and Reformed Churches are supposed to have acquired the practice of confirmation from them.

22 Ramseyer, **Histoire des Baptistes** and others.

22 When we employ the term Mennonite "brotherhood" we mean the entire Mennonite fellowship; when we write: "Mennonite Brethren Church" or "M.B.C." we are referring to the churches of this name in Russia and America, organized in 1860. "M.K.C.," on the other hand means Mennonite Church (in Russia).

23 Compare section IX below on the "Confession of Faith of the Gnadenfeld and Rudnerweide congregations."

24 Or are we to seek the lost "Old Frisians" in the Prussian-Lithuanian congregation?

25 Numerous sources point to the communication with Anabaptists from England, where they had sought sanctuary from the Netherlands during the period of severe persecutions, even before and during Menno's time. But congregations before the time mentioned have not been discovered. Meusel, Ramseyer, Cramp, Vedder.

26 Between 1525-30 the Anabaptists in Switzerland and Southern Germany had large congregations, and the number of those murdered in the persecutions was equally large. In Augsburg their membership numbered over 1000; Hans Denk was their bishop (compare above # 9,c.). 2) Their spiritual descendants are probably the congregations in America numbering over 100,000 members, also known as the Dunkards. Their official name is "The German Baptist Brethren Church." They practice baptism by immersion (immersing the kneeling candidate forwards three times in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), footwashing, our approach to the ministry in that they only pay their "travelling ministers," not their bishops, teachers, and deacons; they elect all their church workers from their midst in open elections; they reject seminaries on principle! To compensate for these, however, they have so many colleges, etc., that their young people, nearly without exception, attend one or the other of these schools; theological training or courses on religion rank as most important in these schools; aside from these they offer many courses on the Bible and the like. With such an education one can get by with a lay minister! (Compare above #11,c.) They refuse military service and the oath. The only thing that seems to separate them from us is an exaggerated emphasis on the baptismal act itself and its sacramental character and other things of this nature. Our Mennonite Brethren Church in America had its "German Department" in McPherson College for many years, a college of the German Baptist Brethren in McPherson, Kansas. The current "professor" J. F. Duerksen, a graduate of the Mennonite teacher training

school in Halbstadt, is head of this department. Rhynsburg seems to have ignored the historical writings of these German Baptists completely; nevertheless we believe on the basis of the evidence in our possession that there is a causal and spiritual connection between the two groups.

27 Reiswitz and Wadzeck. Mennonites and Baptists have from time to time come together. The Dutch Mennonites had a close relationship to the English Baptists; for fifty years, until 1849 (?), they conducted their missionary activity only in association with the English Baptist Missionary Society founded by Carey (*Mennonitische Blaetter*) and the M.B. Church of 1860 gained a great deal from the Baptists (#83ff.).

28 According to the histoical documents in the church archives, the Moravian Brethren exercised a great influence on the Gnadenfeld congregation in its earlier home in Prussia. Zinzendorf's life story and the history of the Moravian Brethren was read with great interest by some important Mennonite "brethren" around 1860. Compare above #4: Deknatel and Zinzendorf, and below #60: Relationship of the Elders of Ohrloff, Rudnerweide and Alexanderwohl with Herrnhut in the decade of the 20s of the last century.

29 Even the government of Frederick the Great became intolerant of the Mennonites toward the end of the old king's life.

30 In the early period the spiritual head of the Mennonites was also called "admonisher," but only by their opponents, in order not to have to grant them the name of "minister." In Prussia until recently (or until today?) and in Russia until today they are often called "Ohm" by members in the congregation; often they were addressed in the third person as "Ohm N" (earlier using the first name especially) and "the Ohms." Compare with the Waldensian "Barbe"—uncle, old man. Today, when the term "Ohm" is disappearing from the colloquial language, younger members address the minister in Russia as "uncle." All of this reminds us of the customs of the Waldensians. Compare, for example, the article "Waldenser" in Neusel.

31 Since approximately 1900 the minister is confirmed by the laying on of hands in all the Molotschna Mennonite congregations.

32 Professor C. H. Wedel of Bethel College, Newton, Kansas, North America, in his works portrays the elders of our earlier history more negatively, as ruling congregations, not yet mature, in a more hierarchical manner. If this is so, then where did our Russian Mennonite congregations, ever since their immigration, receive so much power right from the beginning in the area around Molotschna as well as Chortitza, in the manner we have portrayed? Compare the rest of the evidence. The elder was always important and honored, but never all-powerful (compare below XXV "Church Conference, etc.").

33 That the person called to the position of elder, that is the permanent leadership position in the congregation, should be ordained a second time, when he had already been called into the ministry by the laying on of hands, does not seem to follow. We hold that the prayerful induction of the ordained minister into the position of elder by means of a ceremonial handshake on the part of all the elders and ministers would be more in line with our concept of the office. In like manner, the customary laying on of hands by many, indeed by all of the ordained ministers present, under the direction of the elder, practiced by nearly all Protestants as well as others, at the ordination of a minister seems to us more meaningful and more in line with our concept of the office than the laying on of hands by the elder only. The Waldensians did the same (Meusel). Compare #4,e. footnote, and #63,c footnote.

34 According to the Greek, "bishop" means literally "overseer," "shepherd."

35 It has to be said to the honor of the office and the congregations of the Mennonite brotherhood in Russia that a shudder passed through all the congregations, no matter what their persuasion, when the office of elder was desecrated. Only malicious people take joy in such an event (sometimes even gray-haired people). Today a vocal group is demanding a "group of elders" rather than a "single elder" as the apostolic model and as the most useful system. If it succeeds, we will be led into a dead end, discernable only once we have become caught in it. An aristocratic rule will develop from such a system (or

a tyranny), forms which are universally more despotic than constitutional monarchy, especially as constituted amongst us with broad referendum powers delegated to the ultimately decision-making membership. That is a lesson taught by history. The "elder" or bishop (permanent presiding head), however, may not go beyond the broad constitutional, patriarchal-familiar bishopric of the people, he may not play the demagogic Caesar, nor carry official papers or presentations to the congregation in his coat pocket or desk-drawer, occasionally speak subjectively of these matters to his co-bishops or the congregation without presenting the document itself! It would be timely and appropriate if the congregation would elect, yearly or every three years, members from the congregation to sit with the elder, the ministers, and the deacons on the church council. In this way the elder and/or the church council would not become suspect in the eyes of the congregation and would remain in constant contact with it.

36 Even though with reservations regarding each others' unique characteristics and independent church government. Cf. further #17 and 63: "Cornelius Warkentin."

37 "Autocephalous" or "Independent," in the language of church history.

38 Cf. below #160: "Church Conference."

39 Cf. below further, however, #19: "Isaak Peters."

40 Cf. further Elder Wiebe, Appendix 5.

41 We are in possession of such from, for their time, important ministers.

42 Notes of a Molotschna church elder as well as personal communications from Elder Heinrich Huebert, Rev. Bernhard Harder and others.

43 Concerning the German city churches cf. "Dutch Mennonites."

44 We see that courage and missionary enthusiasm are absent.

45 They came from the province of Groningen, Holland.

46 We express our thanks to the author.

47 The Mennonite church was located "next to" Danzig.

48 Plenipotentiary of the Empress of Russia in matters relating to Immigration, cf. VII.

49 All of "new Russia" was then called the province of "Kherson."

50 For an opposite point of view, cf. "Brenkenhofswalde," IX, 9. ff. and Appendix 4.

51 A teacher of the author for four years around 1860.

52 Mennonite church members would not use this terminology with respect to their ministers.

53 We have explained our view on the education of ministers above in the section on "Dutch Mennonites, Ministers."

54 Spener's "collegia pietatis," later called the **Stunden** ("hours") by the Lutheran and Reformed Pietists ("brethren").

55 The presumed influence is relatively small, in any event worked very slowly. The prevailing teachings and religious-ethical beliefs and prejudices are far more important in the formation of character amongst the Mennonites than the environment. This is apparent especially in the nearly immovable conservative attitude of the Mennonites in Switzerland and North America. They have isolated themselves in these freer and more highly civilized countries for religio-ethical reasons far more than the Mennonites in Russia. This is especially true of the American "Old Mennonites" and "Amish," who are predominantly of Swiss origin. But one can even assert that those of our Mennonites in Russia who have emigrated to North America are more conservative and isolated than their confessional brethren who have remained in Russia. The most conservative were the ones who (originally) emigrated, and thus they have developed, more correctly, they have remained, conservative abroad.

56 In Russia today!?

57 Militarism, war as an ideal.

58 Great amounts, much.

59 Cf. above "Divisions" of the Dutch Mennonites, #9, d.

60 Compare the works of Pastor Mueller in Langnau in the vicinity of Bern, an objective chronicler of the Anabaptists in the Canton of Bern.

61 The very respected Mennonites of France and French Switzerland are called "Anabaptists" without any animosity or ill-will implicit in the term.

62 A chronological or typographical error must have slipped in here: not all of those who had signed the decree were still alive on August 15, 1795.

63 **Les Anabaptistes des Vosges.**

64 Something that the Hutterian Brethren in Russia expended a great deal of effort to achieve, however fruitlessly, as have many other religious and political communities.

65 Something totally alien to us Mennonites in Russia.

66 This method of construction and way of life is also strange to us in Russia.

67 "Vierland," a lowland region near Hamburg.

68 This method also predominates in Russia.

C.
THE MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD OF DUTCH-PRUSSIAN ORIGIN IN RUSSIA, 1789-1860
(i.e. from the immigration to the founding of a separate Mennonite brethren Church)

1 For a more specialized account of the emigration we recommend minister Peter Hildebrandt's **Erste Auswanderung aus dem Danziger Gebiet nach Russland** (The first Emigration from the Danzig Area to Russia), minister D. H. Epp's **Chortitza Mennoniten** ("Chortitza Mennonites") in the 25th anniversary history of the M.B. Church, and Anna Brons and Martin Claassen.

2 Whose government did not forbid the emigration.

3 Around 1700, a district of Amsterdam rich in villas was known as the "Mennonite heaven"; in it the rich Mennonite merchants lived during the summer.

4 Pronounced "Yekaterinoslav."

5 The "Molotschnaia" (Russian for milk river) stream in the province of Taurida flows into the Molotschna Liman lagoon close to the Sea of Azov, formerly in the district of Melitopol (Ujesd), now the boundary between the districts of Melitopol and Berdiansk since the latter was created out of the former.

6 The first church on the Molotschna was built in 1809 at Ohrloff; in 1810 a second was built in Petershagen on the side closest to Halbstadt (known as the "stone church"), which is no longer in existence. These churches, as those of Chortitza, were erected largely at the expense of the crown. Tsar Alexander I had most graciously given the Mennonites on the Molotschna 6,000 rubles in order to build churches. Strangely enough, out of fear of the idea of a paid ministry, our forefathers turned down the crown's offer of a parcel of land for every church!

7 A small number of not unimportant families from the **Kleine Gemeinde** joined the M.B. Church in 1870.

8 In spite of the fact that each village had its "schoolmaster," who filled this position for very little remuneration while carrying on many other activities, the schools of that

time were abysmally poor. They were often transient tramps. Our "old folks" tell many a hilarious and sad anecdote about their schoolmasters and teachers.

9 The mild-mannered Jakob Fast had already formally joined his "Flemish" congregation with the "Frisian" congregation of Rudnerweide and had dropped their various designations (which was then not yet possible in Prussia or the "Old Colony" [district of Chortitza]).

10 There is no law in Russia which would empower any agency of authority, aside from the local brotherhood, to depose a Mennonite elder or minister from his spiritual functions. The secular authorities could only place physical hindrances in the way of their fulfilling their functions, something they did to Heinrich Wiens as we shall see below.

11 Today in 1910, five elders. Only Lichtenau and Petershagen still share an elder.

12 Where spontaneous prayers were said, once (at least according to T. Voth's personal notes) even by the "great" Cornies.

13 Compare B. Harder's poem: "Der Unterschied" (The Difference).

14 His successor was Benjamin Ratzlaff, and that of Ratzlaff, Franz Goerz, Jr., who died in Gnadenfeld.

15 The following is based upon the handwritten **Chronicle or Geschichte der Kolonie und Gemeinde Gnadenfeld** (History of the Colony and Congregation of Gnadenfeld), as well as archival material kindly placed at our disposal by the Gnadenfeld church council, other historical material and the reminiscences and responses to questions by the "old folks."

16 These settled in Franztal and joined the Frisian church of Rudnerweide in Hierschau, Alexanderwohl, with the "Waldheimers" from their temporary Polish home of Przechovka.

17 A relative of the elder.

18 Which, unfortunately, threatens to die (because it is not adequately cared for?).

19 Now written as "Voth." Tobias Voth was probably (?) his direct descendant, as was the highly meritorious school board president Andreas Voth of Neu-Halbstadt who did so much for the Molotschna schools. Thus according to the old Gnadenfeld church register.

20 It would appear to us as though a chronological error was made here.

21 The Gnadenfeld archives contain some of his original letters.

22 Even though not always, the newly engrafted Mennonites often became the most enthusiastic and useful branches of the aging tree. Cf. also Heinrich Heese, Sr.

23 Even the "matter of denial" was enthusiastically and usefully cultivated here.

24 Not the generally known Frisian "Confession or Confession of Faith, etc." (called the Rudnerweide and Kronsweide confession) which was itself an extract from a complete liturgy or church service order still used by the late old Rudnerweide elder Franz Goerz, Sr., and which was kindly loaned to us by Br. Nickel, elder of Rudnerweide. This Rudnerweide liturgy bears the title: "Three Spiritual Sermons." Concerning the articles of faith (more detailed than in the "Confession"), concerning holy baptism and holy communion as well as other Chirstian doctrines according to which deacons, ministers, and elders are elected and confirmed. The book also contains a complete and very long wedding liturgy as well as a liturgy for the expulsion of fallen or the acceptance of new members. Footwashing is performed in the home of the minister on visiting travellers. This book, written in a language strongly reminiscent of the Dutch (confusion of the dative and accusative cases, etc.), was, according to the preface, "translated from the Dutch by Elder Jacob Siebert of the Thiensdorf [Frisian] congregation some years ago" (this congregation still exists in Prussia under the same name), improved by his son Johann S. and, "at the request of various elders and ministers, printed by Julius Adrian in 1800." The place of publication is not indicated, but it must naturally still have been in Prussia. This confession was probably used by all of the so-called "United Frisian Congregations" who stood in a regulated fellowship with the Flemish (although not

without reservations), as a consequence of which the short "Confession" is also called "Confession of Faith of the United Flemish, Frisian and High German (South German) Mennonite Churches." The above-mentioned Gnadenfeld-Alexanderwohl confession was probably representative of those who had not yet joined this union, that is, the old Flemish. Any explanation or corrections concerning this or similar, though perhaps less important if not less interesting, questions by more in-depth researchers would be very much appreciated.

25 One of the negative aspects of Heinrich Franz's school was its intolerance of any other approach. He also lacked Tobias Voth's religious sincerity and Heinrich Heese's love of the Russian language. With these exceptions Franz stood a head taller than all the other Russian Mennonite educators for decades. He was a particularly thorough man; his knowledge of and perseverance in his work were remarkable. His pupils were: Heinrich Epp, secondary school teacher in Chortitza and later church elder; Gustav Rempel, secondary school teacher in Halbstadt; and the already-named famous promoter of education on the Molotschna, Andreas Voth, and Elder August Lenzmann; Peter Neufeld, teacher in the Halbstadt secondary school as a youth (1841-1843), the Gnadenfeld grammar school, then in Odessa, Steinbach, and finally in Gnadenfeld and again, in old age, in the Halbstadt secondary school, later he became our first Mennonite printer in Russia—in Neu-Halbstadt. He had also been pedagogically influenced by Lange, his father-in-law. Father Neufeld died in Neu-Halbstadt at the age of 85 in November 1909. He was the author's teacher in his youth and his colleague at the Halbstadt secondary school in the years of his manhood, and always his much loved fatherly friend.

26 According to the massive bundle of documents we studied carefully in 1882, which pertains to this matter, the civil colonial authorities boldly interfered in this inner-ecclesiastical issue and called on the elders to intervene as judges, gladly lending their ears to the enemies of Gnadenfeld's more vital Christianity (even members of the Gnadenfeld congregation!) who, with a joyous eagerness and malicious zeal, were working to revenge themselves on the "bigots" and "pious" in this sad affair. The latter had to experience how sweet revenge tasted to these honorable gentlemen for some time to come.

27 A standpoint to be held as an ideal to be held in principle and clearly striven for as well as practiced, but which is never to be grasped as an achieved reality (cf. the Apostle Paul: "false brethren," etc.).

28 Compare further: the conclusion to XVII.

29 Elder Friedrich W. Lange performed the marriage ceremony of Pastor Wuest when the latter's bride followed him from Wuerttemberg in 1847, according to Hermann Lenzmann's "Jahrbuch" (Yearbook) of 1905/1906.

30 Who together with Johann Schmidt and Franz had till then formed a group.

31 Since 1873, this house of the former "Brotherhood School" was bought by the Gnadenfeld volost and serves as the secondary school.

32 The occasion was provided by a piece of rented land over which two men quarreled: the one had seeded it while his opponent harvested it. The matter was brought before the congregation. The one who was disciplined found acceptance in a parish of the "Large Congregation," as did many others who thought as he did from the Ohrloff church.

33 According to our assessment.

34 That is, their friends.

35 Napoleon III and Gerhard Wieler of the M.B. Church (XVIII) were alternately regarded by him as the Antichrist, while the "beast" and the word "Baptist" he considered to be identical in name and essence with the Muensterite Anabaptist (cf. I).

36 With regard to Slavic, Bohemian-Moravian, and Polish family names, compare V. "Prussian Mennonite Origins."

37 At age 80. He was buried in the Josephstal cemetery where the grateful South Russian colonists erected a sepulcher in his honor. The Molotschna Mennonite colony of Conteniusfeld also stands as a monument to his work.

38 Of the Kronsweide congregation.

39 Why so?

40 Who probably owned the piece of land **de jure** since he, the father, himself did not belong to the colonial community and thus could not have owned land in it.

41 Of the Flemish Chortitza church.

42 Time and again the judgment of outsiders is a glowing one in contrast to the sad one of the insiders, as we saw above in the section on "Morals and Character."

43 Now article 1104 and 1105, Part I, Volume XI of the legal code of 1896, accurately quoted in Russian and German in "Confession of Faith of the M.B. Church" of 1900/1902, page 58, and further below #105, footnote.

44 Now the article on the Mennonites with regard to the law concerning universal military conscription of 1874. Cf. further "The Military Question and Emigration."

45 It is from him, therefore, that the very favorable assessment of the Mennonites came which was presented to Tsar Paul.

46 Toward the mid 1860s.

47 A short time after 1860 there were 56 villages and four smaller settlements, that is, 60 settlements in all, with the exception of the Hutterite colony, in the two present-day districts of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld, which was then called the "Molotschna Mennonite District."

48 As our fathers reckoned them.

49 In the beginning of the 1860s, the Molotschna had not quite 1400 families who possessed full or half farms and nearly 3000 landless families! The over-abundance of land was in the possession of a few rich Mennonite renters/wool producers at a ridiculously low price, while the landless were forced to rent expensive land some 20 versts away, sometimes even for high rents and sweet words from these rich Mennonite renters.

50 We do not here refer to that "spiritual poverty" of which Jesus speaks in Matt. 5 as the first prerequisite for gaining salvation, but to that spiritual emptiness, "spiritual absence."

51 Undoubtedly those events are referred to here which we will later find discussed under "Elder Heinrich Wiens." Cf. also D. H. Epp, **Landwirtschftlicher Verein** (Agricultural Society), #54, k.

52 The first Molotschna elder. Cf. ##34, 35.

53 Dyck and Wiebe—both ordained as elders in Chortitza at the same time. In order not to allow the ordination succession to be broken (because of the great distance from Prussia), two confirmed Flemish elders were always kept on hand in the Chortitza district. One was always the functioning elder; when he died the second elder took his place and ordained his presumptive successor.

54 Compare #59, d, below.

55 The late Ohrloff church minister Franz Isaak [of Tiege, d. in the Crimea] left them a written testimonial to the effect that until their dissolution as a congregation in Russia around 1870 none of their members had been punished by the authorities. They unitedly guaranteed the debts of their brethren: for that reason no one was allowed arbitrarily to undertake new farming or business ventures without the consent of the congregation! How instructive!

56 According to the assurance of a grandson of Abraham Friesen, the line of elders of this congregation in Russia was as follows: Klaas Reimer (probably to 1837-1838; his notes extend to beyond 1835), Heinrich Balzer, Abraham Friesen (until the dissolution in the 1870s; he became elder again in America), for a time Klaas (?) Enns, and then Jakob Wiebe in the immersionist Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church which went out from her and went to America as a unit.

57 The small "p." is the polite form used in the omission of a title. The delicacy of the epistolary style in this instance, as above in the instances of B. Fast and A. Friesen,

is remarkable and should be emulated now-a-days in our polemical writings, which distinguish themselves more through their incivility then their profundity.

58 How may it have come about that the Russian Mennonites later had no relations with the Moravian Brethren Mission and turned to Barmen in order to have their missionaries educated?

59 These greetings to the Mennonite elders, this "blessing them in the Lord," directed to the fellowship from a church with episcopal succession recognized by the Anglican Episcopal Church of England may well appear remarkable to those readers who have a special interest in church history.

60 Their five churches were found, i.e., are found, in these villages.

62 Naturally, the order was **de jure** illegal and without effect (unless it had been confirmed by the highest authorities) since the imperial law makes no provision either to confirm or depose "spiritual teachers." More than likely this was merely a very energetically expressed "desire and counsel" on the part of the president of the Supervisory Commission, Hahn.

63 From this point to ". . . April" we follow the exact orthography of the original. The rest is in our orthography, though the wording is the same.

64 In the 1844 Odessa edition of the old Mennonite **Gesangbuch** this verse reads as follows: "And though all the devils desire to oppose you, Without a doubt God will not retreat; What He has decided upon and what He desires, must finally come to pass." The author of the "Farewell Address" probably did not have the songbook at his disposal; he wrote in the detention room of the official residence of the colonial inspector of Prischib. On the other hand, he may have quoted the many verses quite freely in his address whereby, as is often the case with especially gifted laymen, his current mood unconsciously produced changes in the poem. On the other hand, however, in isolated instances a conscious parody seems to have taken place.

65 These and a number of other similar senseless copying errors are directly attributable to the copyist and the person who read the sermon before the congregation; but we do not know to what extent he is also responsible for the grammatical errors. His corrections certainly did not improve the text. He had already spent twenty-three years as a church minister and as such the author, copyist, and reader of many sermons. Nevertheless, he still presented this speech, as he himself noted, in this form! The handwriting is that of a man who writes much: it is firm, full of character, readable, attractive, and relatively quickly written. One should note, however, that the autobiography of Klaas Reimer, given in #58, is immeasurably more distorted in our copy. Though his speech is more reminiscent of the Dutch, his ideas are more original and he demonstrates a much broader reading knowledge of theology.

66 He is probably referring to the planting of gardens and forests and the setting-up of farms according to prescribed standards, etc., around which the "religious struggle" turned at that time. Compare #58, m, A. Friesen's "Answer" to Bernhard Fast, above: "Oppose all human ordinances . . ." And #59, c,d,e, as well as "Johann Cornies and the Agricultural Society" further on. Also the village mayor T. from F.

67 Cornies' regime with its innovations directed "against the Mennonites," according to Wiens' point of view.

68 We believe that this man, with iron in his blood and the old Dutch Anabaptist martyr's backbone, could also have done that. We honor him for his manly courage even though we might wish him to have been different with regard to his perception, education, and understanding of culture. The great "Fuser" will know exactly how to separate the gold from the slag in H. Wiens and Johann Cornies. In this instance our sympathy does not lie with our ideal: Johann Cornies and Privy Councillor Hahn, even though our old and new "jingoistic Cornies admirers"—the man was victorious and so one naturally shouts hurrah three times—were and are of the opinion that they must pour contempt on Wiens and constantly fall on their knees and fold like a pocket knife every time Cornies' name is mentioned. But even in this instance everyone will be rewarded according to how he has acted in life, be these good or evil (I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10). These works of

God, once so frightful to the author, have become, after much heartache, intellectual disorientation, and feelings of despair during a period of nearly 25 years of digging in the dust of our Russian Mennonite past, a freeing, indeed a richly consoling word: "For the day shall declare it . . . and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work—whatever part of any man's work—abide . . . he shall receive—for that 'gold' which remains, etc.—a reward. If any man's work shall be burned—whatever will burn of his works—he shall suffer loss: but himself shall be saved [if he built upon Christ, verse 12]; yet as by fire": Johann Cornies and Privy Councillor Hahn, H. Wiens and mayor T. Klaas Reimer and Bernhard Fast, etc.

69 The journey was to be made alone in the company of his family along a compulsory route (one always travelled to and from Prussia in the company of many people). According to tradition, this journey led over a poorer and more dangerous road than was usually taken: it was probably the stage coach route. The small travelling family is thus also supposed to have been threatened by robbers and been exposed to many other dangers.

70 This was 13 years before the "exodus" of the "Mennonite Brethren" (XV). Compare this document with #59 above: "Letter to the Elders etc. in Prussia" and the following "Letter of several Quietists etc."; #69: "Cornelius Warkentin," diary; ##68 & 69: "Johann Cornies"; #87, a: "Diary," and #107: "Bernhard Harder's Letter." Elder Jakob Dyck, Sr., in his "Letters," (#57) is much superior to the author of this sermon. How incomparably higher to Cornelius Warkentin and Gerhard Wiebe (716) stand than Wiens! How far had the level of education and perception of the ministers sunk, and how necessary had intellectual and spiritual improvement become! How little of that remained which Isaak Peters (#19) had described as ancient evangelical-Mennonite practice! What would Wiens have become had he been able to acquire an education "within the bosom of the church" as Isaak Peters described it! An A Adamantius!

71 We declare our indebtedness to the literary owner.

72 A few years after Cornies' death. Cornies died nine months after he had occasioned the expulsion of Elder Wiens. In 1854 "Elder" J. Wall baptized (Franz Isaak) in Gnadenfeld.

73 The writer is probably referring to the above-mentioned discord which arose between Bernhard Fast and Ohrloff on the one hand and the congregations of Rudnerweide, Alexanderwohl and Gnadenfeld on the other hand, although they had earlier co-operated in matters concerning missions.

74 Felsental was founded around 1820 by David Reimer of Kronsgarten in the vicinity of Ekaterinoslav (father of the repeatedly mentioned Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld in this book) and was carried on after David Reimer's death by his brother Jakob. A wonderful paradise-like creation arose and is still in existence in this monotonous Nogai steppe surpassing, in regard to its vegetation, all our steppe oases, the more so since a constantly flowing brook, the Kajikulak and source of the Molotschna, winds its way between rocks, pastures, and tall trees. Felsental was also Johann Cornies' favorite spot: one still points to a group of four trees, now dying, which he planted single-handedly on the high steppes. As a school for the growing of trees, Felsental has contributed much good to the Molotschna. Much quiet doing of good has been practiced here. The "quiet attitude" described above had to produce such a "Bethany"; it has to foster such a quiet attitude. Attractive pieces of granite rock, in the last analysis the "spur of the Carpathian Mountains," literally form models and visual pictures of mountains. A not yet dried up spring ripples down to the Kajikulak from the high steppes. After the death of Jakob Reimer and his relatives, Miss Gertrude Reimer, the latter's daughter, was owner for some time. She sold the land to David Claassen (the son of Johann Claassen of Liebenau and the Kuban; David Claassen's wife is a granddaughter of Jakob Reimer the elder) a grandson of David Reimer through his mother. At present 1900, David Claassen is the Mennonite representative in school matters for all Molotschna Mennonite villages and both districts as well as the representative of all the Russian Mennonites in matters relating to the forestry service as a substitution for military service. Miss Gertrude Reimer, "Aunt Trudy," is eighty years old and has retired, with

two of her friends, to a smaller home, a few steps away from the old "manor house," called "small Felsental" and surrounded by flowers, especially roses, until she moves to her last "home." May the sun of God's grace smile upon her pathway and upon the pathway of all those residing in Felsental! It should be noted that our great Russian school teacher Heinrich Franz, Sr., first taught in Felsental in the family of David Reimer, and that Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld-Wiesenfeld was his equally old student and fast friend (but then!—cf. #52 "Brotherhood School Quarrel" below).

75 Also called "Angel Brothers" and "Emotional Brothers" in Holland.

76 The congregations of Chortitza.

77 Our orthography; as always, changed to conform with the contemporary usage.

78 A Frisian congregation. Warkentin served both of the rival congregations in an impartial manner and also ordained the Kronsweide church minister Klassen (?) as elder.

79 The choice of this text was somewhat daring. But then, what significance did a journey from Elbing in Prussia to Chortitza have at that time! His companion, Elder Cornelius Regier, probably died from the effects of the journey's hazards.

80 Perhaps we find much, indeed very much emphasis placed upon emotions and crying; but sentimentality was also very pronounced in the secular literature of the time. After a period of sterile rationalism people again wished thoroughly to experience the emotions (Goethe's **Leiden des Jungen Werther**, Karamsin's **Reisebriefe**, Bednaja's **Lisa**, etc.

81 Under #63(2) below we present the fundamental order of the office of elder in the Chortitza Colonies and the succession of elders in the Mennonite Church of southern Russia.

82 What would Elder Klaas Reimer of the **Kleine Gemeinde** and Elder Heinrich Wiens of the "Large Congregation" say to this?

83 Compare #53 and Heinrich Heese, **Short History**.

84 Usually called the "good" room by German peasants and the petit bourgeoisie.

85 With the use of A. Kroeker's **Family Almanac** of 1900, personal recollections, and the tales of older people.

86 That is, "for peasant" conditions. On the property of large Mennonite landowners one may see thirty or more plows in operation at one time, each with six oxen or five horses harnessed to them. One should then apply the same ratio to everything else.

87 Those from Lepp-Wallmann, Johann Abram Friesen, Franz and Schroeder, Koop etc., etc. It also holds that all other machinery comes predominantly from Mennonite manufacturers, especially wagons.

88 This could only be a reference to the earliest or bad years, for the steppes then provided plenty of hay.

89 Or also great and great-great-grandparents for some of our readers.

90 What may have been the original form of this now very coarse sounding word "Morgall?" It probably derives from "my (mei) Gell." "Gell," in colloquial old English [probably also in the Dutch], means as much as "Dirndl," i.e., "Maedel" in southern Germany.

91 Those who knew Elder P. Wedel during his youth tell how he had his Bible lying next to him while cutting silage in order to prepare for his sermons! On one occasion, while performing this double duty, during which he paid closer attention to his Bible than to the fodder chopper, it is supposed to have happened that his finger was cut off and mixed with the silage.

92 Because people could so very easily have accidents with these machines. Many a mother or employer, according to their own testimony, never prayed more than when this humming began.

93 Immigrated in 1804. For the present generation he would already be a great-great-grandfather.

94 These were farmers; large landowners had as many as ten thousand.

95 One verst equals 1066.79 meters or .94 kilometers, i.e., nearly one kilometer.

96 "A Mennonite, who came here [from Prussia] and brought a considerable sum of money along with him, bought a former estate close to this village and set up a very prominent distillery. He knew how to nullify the law of the land which opposed him in the acquisition of the land and especially in the acquisition of the noble title." (N.B.: The Molotschna Mennonite district for years operated a flourishing community distillery in Neu-Halbstadt under the direction of Johann Neufeld. The Pankeiev lumber yard, a part of the original building, is still standing. The Chortitza district also owned its own distillery.)

97 Around 1850-1860 three rubles 50 kopeks "banco" were the equivalent of one silver ruble.

98 Many farmers joined forces by harnessing their horses together for plowing, as the later "renters" were to do.

99 Unfortunately, the "Beitraege" ("Contributions") do not provide the names of the travellers mentioned here.

100 These ditches soon had to give way to the more regular painted fences or nice low walls of burnt bricks.

101 A man by the name of Siemens, who, in 1819, had already been area administrator in Chortitza for 22 years, built the Ohrloff church.

102 Kaghasch, Jurtemgale, Besch-Aul, Apanle, Burkut, etc.

103 The original name of the society, cf. #69,a, "Confirmation."

104 Named as such by the government. Cf. the following footnote.

105 Thus a considerable group of Anabaptists, the Mennonite brotherhood of south Russia, for the first time in their history had a common civil chief, whom they would not depose, in the person of a fellow Mennonite brother! And this "regency" has been good for us in spite of the fact that it did not always rule scrupulously in "accordance with God's law" and with "evangelical methods." At the present we also are "representative of all the Mennonites in Russia" with regard to matters pertaining to the substitution of forestry service for military service appointed by the highest authorities. The latter, however, is elected every three years (he is usually called "president").

106 Today we have a number of Mennonites who have been elevated to the position of an inheritable honorary citizenship or into the nobility (and their children thus into the inheritable honorary citizenry) directly and specifically as a reward by the Tsar, or through being given a rank or order in the civil service orders, for their accomplishments in agriculture, industry, public welfare, as doctors, teachers, etc. Others have acquired scholarly diplomas through advanced studies and examinations or, because of their position in life, have formally joined the citizenry of the cities or the merchant guilds. All of these have left the agricultural Mennonite communities but have remained church members and "non-resistant" Mennonites. And even though some might, through their service in distant regions as a consequence of their civil service position—which happens quite accidentally—advance to the rank of a true privy councillor or be decorated with a higher rank and thereby join the hereditary nobility, this still would not alter their church status since neither rank nor orders nor nobility forces them to do military service in Russia or to "carry the sword" in any other manner. Earlier this matter was understood differently, and Cornies acted in a correct and necessary manner for his time and circumstances.

107 According to the same, the membership schools of the colonists were subordinated to the "priests, pastors and spiritual teachers of the Mennonites." In 1881 and later these were entrusted, without exception, with the supervision of the religious instruction and the religio-moral education, and also guaranteed a sufficient number of hours in religious speech (natural speech) by the highest authorities.

108 Since the society was composed only of Mennonite brothers, i.e., members of the congregations, he not only had the right but also the duty to report such instances, as did every member of the Mennonite brotherhood irrespective of parish boundaries.

109 Thus according to our sources and the tradition as we know it. Others portray the matter as though Cornies had displaced the punishment of the church ban and substituted compulsory labor and corporal punishment for the "brethren." We believe that our information portrays Cornies more correctly.

110 And the noisy patriots consider it their honor-bound duty to keep the fires burning under them. Cf. our evaluation of "Heinrich Wiens": "gold" and "dross."

111 Cf. #160(2).

112 Cf. "Brotherhood School" above and "Kuban Settlement" below.

113 Ranking above this office was the almost incomprehensible level of "Privy Councillor in Odessa" (the president of the Supervisory Commission) and the "Minister in St. Petersburg." And over both of these in exalted heights stood "the Tsar" whose name we would only think or speak in prayer to God as children.

114 Nicholas I, 1825-1855.

D.
THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED CHRISTIAN ANABAPTIST MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH (M.B. CHURCH) OF 1860 IN THE MIDST OF THE SOUTH RUSSIAN MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD OF DUTCH-PRUSSIAN ORIGIN

1 P. Regehr, **Kurze Geschichte der M.B. Gemeinde** (A Short History of the M.B. Church). Also, the late church minister Franz Isaak's highly regarded, though one-sided, book, **Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten** (The Molotschna Mennonites), with its heroic frankness has made it completely impossible for us to make allowances for any sensitive issues.

2 This is how the title was given earlier. This was written in 1902. Since then the work has taken on a different character for reasons that are explained in the preface.

3 About 20,000 persons in approximately 4,000 families including all those who had settled on rented or their own land outside the villages, all of whom belonged to the Molotschna parishes.

4 Two villages, Klippenfeld and Hamberg, were added later on.

5 It should be stated that the Mennonite mayors never had secretaries, nor do they now. They take care of their own official correspondence and keep their own books. Formerly in German and now in Russian.

7 In whose home the church services usually took place. Emigrated to America.

8 Approximately 12,000 persons in approximately 2,500 families including all those who had settled on rented, or their own land outside the villages.

9 Emigrated to America in 1874

10 A Lutheran neighbor colony to Halbstadt and center (Area Administrative Office) of the "Molotschna Colonial District," now called the "Prischib Volost."

11 The same restrictions were imposed upon his preaching by the Consistory for the Lutheran colonies in response to the complaints of the pastors. Cf. "Pastor Dobbert," below.

12 Hermann Lenzmann, the son of Elder Lenzmann and teacher of religion at the secondary school in Gnadenfeld, has the following to say about Wuest and his relatonship

to Gnadenfeld in the **Mennonitisches Jahrbuch** (Mennonite Yearbook) of 1904/05: ". . . The revivalist Eduard Wuest, who was stationed in our vicinity, i.e., in Neu-Hoffnung close to Berdiansk, whose work there was richly blessed and who also came to our congregations, lived in intimate fellowship with my beloved father and his predecessor, Elder Friedrich W. Lange, throughout his life and often preached in their congregations as they did in his. Wuest was also married by Lange [1847]. . . ."

13 These could still be had at Franz Kluge's in Reval ten years ago. The inaugural sermon, unfortunately in incomplete form, is printed in A. Kroeker's (Address: Halbstadt, Taurida) **Pastor Wuest**, 1904. To be recommended highly.

14 Written in 1904.

15 However, not to be done by all Mennonite brothers of different persuasions: The "Mennonite Church Brethren," the "Mennonite Brethren," and "Evangelical Mennonite Brethren" should not acquire so much from elsewhere and incorporate it as to displace that which is specifically Mennonite! This footnote was written at Christmas, 1909. Compare #18,b, footnote.

16 The italics derive from us as do the numbering of the various parts.

17 Which one can find in A. Kroeker's booklet, **Pastor Wuest.**

18 The word used in German is "connection," apparently one of Zinzendorf's slogans.

19 Claassen, too, had to taste these rods to the end of his life.

20 This mistake is explained by the fact that the honorable author had been raised in the already onesidedly-developed Hoffmannism.

21 The author, too, who was long inspired by Hoffmann and will never forget all the positive things he received from him—nor forget the sympathetic personal meeting with Christian Paulus, Sr., and others of this group—feels it as an irreparable loss that such a group of noble and sympathetic men, as are to be found amongst the Mennonite Templars, has been robbed to him by the apostasy of the Templars from the ecumenical (universal ancient Christian) and truly biblical Christian faith and their transformation into a moralistic-socialistic-philosophical reform society. It is the quiet hope of the author that by their formally official adoption of the name of a "Mennonite church," confirmed by their highest leaders, that the Russian Templars have taken a step in the direction of conservatism, in the good sense of the word, which must sooner or later have wholesome consequences.

22 The same is true of the author's blessed mother and oldest sister, who belonged to the first "sisters" of the M.B. Church.

23 We find a belated confirmation in Franz Isaak's **Molotschna Mennoniten**, p. 253, document of the Ohrloff Council of Church Leaders, Sept. 28, 1866.

24 This is the way it is in the well-ordered Lutheran churches. All ancient churches have it thus: the Greek Orthodox, etc., Spurgeon's church and many other brotherhood churches do the same: the Plymouth Brethren (Georg Mueller), etc. It is in this regard that the M.B. Church still does not follow the apostolic-ecumenical model, and the ideal, which it correctly cherished at its birth. Every Christian should have the opportunity—though not be forced—to confirm the "fellowship of the body and blood of Christ" and the remembrance of His death until He comes, as well as the fellowship of the members of His body among themselves by this holy act every Sunday (Acts 2). The Protestant state churches of Germany, in order to avoid a separation, today allow their "fellowship groups" the separate celebration of the Lord's Supper in the way indicated, or even also in private circles with or without the pastor through the supervision of the "laity."

25 Under the direction of Abraham Cornelssen, school teacher in Elizabethtal.

26 By 27 heads of families, i.e., by men of full age and a corresponding number of sisters.

27 We possess this document, written by Abraham Cornelssen, in various hand written copies and the version printed in the No. 1, 1863, issue of the **Mennonitische Blaetter.**

28 "Confession of Faith."

29 One should note well that as yet there is no mention of a repetition of baptism or of immersion. Cf. XX below: "Baptism by Immersion."

30 Compare this with Pastor Dobbert below in "Documentary Supplements," #170.

31 The Area Administrative Officer was also called the "Area Elder."

32 We have become more and more convinced of that which we repeatedly hinted at above through the church minister Franz Isaak's strongly one-sided justification of Ohrloff in every respect in his **Molotschna Mennoniten** to the detriment of our Reverend B. Fast as portrayed in his documents!

33 Thus Heinrich Huebert and "Ausgangschritte" (Exodus). We read the same in the booklet noted in #58 below written by Elder Abraham Friesen of the **Kleine Gemeinde: Eine Einfache Erklaerung** (A simple Explanation), 1845, p. 23: "There [at the weddings] the immodest joking, laughing, and the mutual arousing of the sexes, the mad singing and drinking begin, where music and dancing occur at not a few places and one must say that there is no longer any Christian life; much rather there is a godless life in accord with heathen desire so that we have ample reason to keep our youth away from such things as much as possible."

34 This is an allusion to the fact that the members of the Ohrloff congregation involved in the "Barley Dispute," (#52) who resisted their congregation's disciplinary measures, found an irregular acceptance in other congregations.

35 In his letter to the Kuban congregation from Tiflis of April 19, 1866, Claassen writes concerning this act: ". . . On the 10th of February, 1860, the three of us—Cornelssen, Koop, and I—were ordered to appear before the inspector. There Inspector Andre and Philip Wiebe [Ohrloff] made some very reasonable suggestions to us, which we believed and signed, that is, to receive the permission of the authorities before we would make any steps to form our own church. I believe I had not yet reached home when I began to see how foolishly I had acted, for the authorities would never consent to such a move. That was a lesson to me; since then I have never asked, in any of my writings, for permission to found a church, but have always said that we are a church. . . ." [Cf. #95 below: "First Election of Ministers".]

36 Only after the final completion of our section on the M.B. Church did we learn of Franz Isaak's **Molotschna Mennoniten** and the later documents covering B. Fast contained in it.

37 What an untenable argument!

38 This was an unspiritual, crooked, i.e., not quite honest action which Claassen condemned as long as he lived.

39 Jakob B. wrote "Boecker;" Benjamin, "Bekker."

40 With the exception of three single young men who had reached the age of majority—B. Becker, B. Penner, and H. Bartel—all the signatories were heads of families.

41 One did not want to transfer the confirmation to any of the elders since they were not recognized as "bishops of the Church of Christ." They were to be only witnesses.

42 Formerly a school teacher who died in the Crimea.

43 Elder Abraham Unger of Einlage was ordained by the Baptist elder, J. G. Oncken, of Hamburg in 1869 (cf. #200), who had in turn been ordained by Pastor Sears, a professor of Theology from America. In 1875, Unger and Schellenberg jointly ordained Elder Jakob Jantz of Friedensfeld. In Jantz's ordination, therefore, the autonomous ordination of the Molotschna M.B. Church came together with that of Oncken. Elder J. Jantz ordained Elder Aron Lepp of Andreasfeld (Einlage), while Lepp ordained Elder David Schellenberg of Rueckenau, Molotschna, in 1882. The last three elders have installed, at times singly and at times in concert, all of the elders of the Russian M.B. Church to 1900 and later. The M.B. Church of Russia therefore possesses a Huebert-Oncken ordination. She could have acquired a "Flemish," that is, "old Flemish" ordination, since Flemish and old Flemish ordained elders have joined her both in Russia

and America; but that was unimportant to her. At one time even the Ohrloff congregation, on the condition that each side recognize the other as a "church of God," would have been prepared to ordain Huebert. (Compare #63[2]: "Succession of Elders of the Mennonite Church," and the sections referred to there. All the names of the elders of the M.B. Church can be found in chapter XXXI.)

44 The following men adopted the position of the noble and wise men, like Contenius and Faddeiev, in this governing body: Privy Councillor von Hahn—even though here and there somewhat despotic, yet fundamentally always idealistic and noble—and Baron Rosen; now it is Privy Councillor Hamm, Court Councillor Lange and others like them. In the colonies it was the nearly all-powerful David Friesen. We will learn to know these gentlemen of the Committee especially in chapter XXV: "Documentary Supplements."

45 The Supervisory Commission. The original always has "die Fuersorgekomitaet," or "die Komitaet," according to the orthography of the day.

46 The "Barley Quarrel," an unpleasant and even uglier quarrel than the one with the M.B. Church; a petty, unimportant question concerning a civil point of law which created discord between Ohrloff-Petershagen (Halbstadt) and the rest of the congregations by being carried over, in a most foolish and sad manner, onto the church floor where it became mixed up with the "Neu-Halbstadt church building quarrel." Johann Neufeld of Neu-Halbstadt, a member of the Ohrloff-Petershagen congregation (in existence since 1824) and a rich man, the leaseholder of the distillery of the Molotschna colony, in the 1850s built a large, new church for this congregation but in Neu-Halbstadt rather than Petershagen (where the "stone church" of 1810 was torn down, the stones being built into the foundation of the imposing new church, just as the stones from the first Ohrloff church constitute the foundation of the present Ohrloff church) nearly exclusively from his own means. Meanwhile, because of the sad and dishonorable "barley affair" a large number of members (even ministers—Johann Dyck of Ladekopp), in opposition to the church regulations, separated themselves from "Ohrloff-Petershagen" and joined the "Lichtenau-Petershagen" congregation. Even Johann Neufeld himself did so because of these and other congregational issues. He and the others who had left Ohrloff arbitrarily claimed the church building in Neu-Halbstadt for the Lichtenau-Petershagen congregation. By a decision of the Supervisory Commission of 1862 the church, already dedicated (by Elder August Lenzmann) in 1858, and which had called itself the "Ohrloff-Halbstadt congregation" since 1858, remained with Ohrloff. Neufeld was reimbursed two-thirds of the building costs. For the present situation compare #113, footnote.

47 Father of the teacher Abraham Braun of Gnadenfeld. Cf. his "Chronik der Molotschna Kolonien" (Chronicle of the Molotschna Colonies) in Elder Dirks' **Mennonitisches Jahrbuch** (Mennonite Yearbook).

48 Not correctly quoted.

49 Not so: they called it the communion service of the "carnally minded." Cf. the document of January 6, "Communion Service."

50 Underlined by us as also in most of the documents which have preceded.

51 About this time Claassen and a number of the other brethren urgently requested passes and the permission to move away, which, however, the Area Administrative Office and the Council of Church Leaders denied them. This document can be found in the **Mennonitische Blaetter** of 1863.

52 The full Mennonite Church statute of 1800 and 1801 (now in vol. XI, Part I of the legal code, Book II "Concerning the Administration of the Spiritual Matters of the Christians of the Protestant Confessions," Section III, Chapter VI in the last edition of 1896) reads as follows: "Article 1104. The Mennonites practice their articles of faith unhindered and in accordance with their own church statutes and customs. Article 1105. The spiritual teachers of the Mennonites exercise their official duties in accordance with the rules of their confession and are not permitted [in so doing] to meddle in secular and other affairs which do not accord with the priestly dignity." In addition we find in their statutes the right of the Mennonites (as of all colonists) to build churches and houses of prayer on their lands. (Article 121, vol. XII, Part II. This article, of the "Colonial

Ustavs" which seems on the whole no longer to be in effect, according to the codification notes in the additions to the above-cited volumes of the legal code, never revoked.) It should be noted that the law nowhere prescribes that Mennonites must have their buildings used for religious meetings confirmed as such, that is, they are for religious meetings confirmed as such, that is, they are not forbidden to hold church services in private homes, something that is true for all other confessions, unfortunately also for the Baptists (Statute 1879, Articles 1106-1108 of the above-mentioned Part I, vol. XI). Church building plans must, of course, be approved in accordance with existing building laws. Therefore, Mennonites throughout Russia have conducted funerals, weddings, and many other religious services mostly in the private homes without notifying the police, and periodic attempts made by subordinate police officials to curtail such freedom have proved futile. The higher courts of appeal have repeatedly recognized these "statutes and practices" of the Mennonites as legal. A further legal determination in the colonial as well as the school Ustav is the equality established between the "religious teachers of the Mennonites" and the "fathers and pastors:" in respect to the administration of religious and moral education in the schools. Article 116 of the above-cited Colonial-Ustav mentions the rights of the Mennonites, as set forth in the chapter of privileges, simply and solemnly to confirm a promise instead of using the oath in defence of oneself. As far as we know, the law includes no other norms bearing on Mennonite religious questions.

53 The **Kleine Gemeinde** before, and the "Lichtenau" congregation, after 1820.

54 Since the time of Cornies, one had become accustomed, in St. Petersburg, to expect the highest intelligence and the greatest competence from the Molotschna Mennonites in Ohrloff. Philip Wiebe, Cornies' son-in-law and immediate successor (as well as his earlier secretary), and, like Cornies, "corresponding member of the Learned Committee of the Ministry of Crown Lands—a private citizen during this battle—was even then asked, in a private or official manner, his opinion from those above him. And Wiebe, like all the rest of the Ohrloff intelligentsia, was in accord with Elder Johann Harder, minister Isaak Martens of Tiegenhagen, minister Franz Isaak, Ohrloff's and the M.B. Church's real lawyer, minister Bernhard Harder, the great revivalist and friend of the brethren, among others, in these ecclesiastical quarrels (to which were added some other matters, already known to us, between Ohrloff and the "Five"). The most important Russian papers of Philip Wiebe were co-authored by the genial Johann Fast of Neu-Halbstadt who died in 1872 (father of the current Halbstadt secretary Hermann Fast), well-known as "secretary Fast" and "Petersburg Fast" (because he spent considerable time in St. Petersburg due to the disorder in the Area Administrative Office and in regard to the land question during the 1860s after Claassen's example, whom he, to this author personally and repeatedly called a pathfinder for right and freedom through his activity in St. Petersburg).

55 With this title, then—if that should be of importance to anyone—Huebert's election and ordination of May 30-June 5, 1860, as first minister, was sanctioned on the part of the elders of the original Molotschna Mennonite Church (an election and ordination in no way placed in doubt by the five elders), since the Mennonites had repeatedly "ordained" elders by means of letters. In this way the Prussian Mennonite elders had "ordained" the first Chortitza elder (Behrend Penner) and the Dutch an elder for the United States (according to van der Smissen and others). Thus, according to Mennonite custom, a written acknowledgment is sufficient, and therefore the entire ecclesiastical edifice of the M.B. Church, because it was tacitly sanctioned in two letters, is beyond reproach from the Mennonite point of view. Indeed, it is as valid as though Harder had actually ordained Huebert by the laying on of hands, something Harder had been prepared to do but which the M.B. Church did not wish, however. The Church of the Moravian Brethren, which practices an episcopal consecretion and affirms the "apostolic succession," ordained an elder (bishop, pastor) by means of a letter for the Danish West Indian colonies in 1750, an ordination that was officially sanctioned by the King of Denmark. Cf. "Count Zinzendorf" in the **Calwer Familienbibliothek** and other sources.

56 Which annulled the ecclesiastical actions of the M.B. Church, especially its marriages. Cf. further "15."

57 Compare a) and e) above, and the footnote to e). It should be noted that the Council of Church Elders adhered to a strict concept of an apostolic succession. Cf. #63(2).

58 In his letter of April, 1866, to the church at the Kuban, Claassen remarked that, after the **faux pas** of February 10, 1860, he never again requested permission or recognition, but always said: "We are a congregation." He even did this in his most humble petition.

59 The first marriage ceremony in the M.B. Church—the marriage of the widower Br. Heinrich Neufeld to Maria Schmidt in Einlage on Easter, 1862—was performed by Br. Benjamin Becker, the itinerant minister ordained by Br. Huebert. About the same time, Elder Huebert married Br. Heinrich Bartel to Helene Regehr in the Molotschna, and on September 30, 1862, he married the widowed Br. Jakob Becker to a Miss Wiens, the step-daughter to Br. Franz Klassen of Elizabethtal. It was this last marriage that provoked the circular of which the one presented above is a repetition. Matters took much the same course in Chortitza, only still worse.

60 Involved here are the lists of families compiled for purposes of emigration to the Kuban.

61 Of the Rudnerweide Church.

62 This should be noted!

63 Sad to say, chapter XXV, in the "Documentary Supplements," presents us with an excess of this material.

64 In this form, this was probably a **faux pas** on the part of the M.B. Church, since she was fully recognized by the established authorities. Or was it the strong desire to live at peace with her neighbors?

65 Compare the official document of the five elders.

66 The author.

67 In general, Lenzmann's personality exerted a highly sympathetic, and at the same time, respect and trust inspiring impression upon the author. His was a truly bishop-pastorlike stature in the good sense of the word, behind as well as away from the pulpit, perhaps more in the sense of his conception of the Moravians' "brother pastor" than in the Mennonites' "Ohm elder" sense, somewhat in the image of the educated Baptist ministers whom he came to know later on.

68 In the closest of connections with the Einlage M.B. Church.

69 Most intimately connected—in the recollections—with Neu-Hoffnung and Pastor Wuest.

70 Especially by the teacher Peter Siemens, who died in Lichtfeld in 1905 at a ripe old age, and at that time was a miller and Bible study leader in Conteniusfeld as well as an enthusiastic disciple of Wuest and supporter of Gnadenfeld (at that time).

71 Now, thank God, the dispute has been forgotten! Many members of the Petershagen congregation in Halbstadt and Neu-Halbstadt have, because of its proximity, joined the Halbstadt parish. The ministers have a brotherly relationship and exchange pulpits with one another. (Compare #99 b, footnote.)

72 Nikolai Schmidt of Steinbach, the Gnadenfeld minister during that time a very warm and emotional Wuestian brother, wrote him concerning similar favorite expressions of Bartel in a P.S. to a letter to Johann Claassen of November 29, 1854, who was then accompanied by Bartel, in St. Petersburg and Reval on behalf of the "Brotherhood School" and the Foreign Missions: "Dear Br. Bartel! Your letters make me rejoice; but please, treating the devil so casually and rejecting him so summarily will not do it; only a quiet withdrawal under the cross of Christ and an immersion in His wounds can help. For he takes flight only at the sight of Christ's blood; that he cannot take."

73 Moreover Claassen also had intimate fellowship with the German "church believers" there, for which he was also "reprimanded." About the same time Bartel wrote to Claassen that he had visited the Wuerttemberg brothers and sisters and had washed those, who were in the "process of becoming pious," i.e., no longer were enthusiasts, with

a cleaner drawn from the Gospel, so that the brethren had said later that Bartel "had been like a mad dog amongst them." Bartel himself concluded from this good-naturedly that this was a proof that "his Gospel was still salty" if it bit like that.

74 At this time, baptism by immersion (cf. XX) had already gained the victory in the M.B. Church.

75 Where a considerable number of Mennonite, Wuerttemberger, and "Planer" brothers and sisters had gathered. Several M.B. families lived there as renters of crown land (Nogai land).

76 The apostolic church has been founded, and one need only to return to the old foundation, remove the rubbish and repair that which has been destroyed. One can only find—we say—new branches, rooms, organizations for the purpose of building and expanding better. Nor is, according to the author's understanding, the M.B. Church anything else than such an attempt better and more correctly to build the one true church.

77 This letter was not yet the answer to the correspondence dated between June 11 and 18, which first portrayed the essential nature of the "leapers"; at that time the mail moved very slowly. On top of that, the brethren sent the mail by way of Berdiansk because they could not trust their mail to go by way of Halbstadt.

78 He was then in his seventh month.

79 Twice, in 1862 (through Claassen's efforts) and again in 1867, he rejoined the fellowship; but at the time of his death he was not in full association with the M.B. Church, being more like the "Templers" according to current concepts.

80 Both lived outside the colony, on land belonging to the Nogai people nearer to Berdiansk where they farmed, so that Cornelssen had very little influence on the church at that time.

81 Later brother Abram Cornelssen appears again in the association of churches as an outstanding and fruitful leader.

82 For details about this group, see #184 and 188.

83 This situation was resolved during the summer of 1867 when Claassen, after he had brought the settlement to order, came from the Kuban to the Molotschna and presented himself to the appropriate authorities, who after a short interview, quashed the investigation. See "Documentary Supplements" until 1866 (1867), B.7.

84 Died 1906.

85 "Diary," etc.

86 Not to be confused with his brother, Gerhard Wieler, cited earlier.

87 It is to be stressed that this group defends the familiar expressions of joy, but does not practice them in their meetings "because it is a troubled time,"—so we are informed. That is commendable.

88 According to reports of Heinrich Huebert and others, Ludwig Hofacker's sermons were also an important means of promoting revival in the Molotschna Colony. Many ministers read them from the pulpit with great edification for their listeners. One such case was minister Johann Dyck, of Ladekopp, according to Elder Heinrich Huebert. Many families read them on Sundays and holidays. The author's mother also became convicted of sin and received assurance of salvation through them.

89 He had been instructed and baptized by Elder Wilhelm Lange; at the time of this writing, Friedrich Lange was elder in Gnadenfeld (Section 49).

90 The millions of strict Baptists, certainly. But in England, where individual Baptist congregations are very independent (even performing infant baptism where it is desired by the parents), there are exceptions, as we know from eyewitness accounts. The church of the "Brethren" or "Dunkards" in America (German Baptist Brethren Church), which has more than 100,000 members, baptizes the kneeling candidate three times forward. Thus also the Western churches when they baptize adults.

91 The election of ministers (Heinrich Neufeld and Abram Unger) must have taken place during these days, according to the "Answers" of May 7, 1862, given below. Exact

date not ascertained. Probably it took place, as with the Polish Mennonite Brethren, immediately before baptism.

92 And what is meant by the Mennonite-Low-German words "do Doop," "deepe?" The **Calwer Kirchenlexicon** states "the German word 'taufen,' associated with 'teufen,' 'tief,' Gothic 'daupjan,' originally meant 'immersion,' like the Greek 'baptizein.' The New Testament contains only the fact that the baptism was carried out according to the precedent of John the Baptist by immersion in running [?] water (Acts 8:36-38)."

93 Mrs. Christine Hege in her **Kurze Geschichte der Mennoniten**, Frankfurt, 1909, which was awarded a prize by the Association of Mennonite Churches in the German Empire, states on p. 11 "in the Sitter."

94 According to Zoeckler's **Handbuch der Theologischen Wissenschaft**, 1898, II, 236, they were a sub-sect of the Arminians [and not of the "Mennonites" as stated on p. 30(c) of our book, due to an error in copying and editing] with Baptist baptismal practice. According to Herzog's **Abriss der gesammten Kirchen-Geschichte**, 1892, II, 300, "they disappeared among the Mennonites in the eighteenth century." Called "Rhynsburger" after their center, the village (not "city") of Rhynsburg, close to the city of Leyden. Main founders—the three brothers van Kodde, residents of Rhynsburg.

95 Independents: Christians (branched off from the Presbyterians) who demand full independence for each congregation (as do all Mennonite and Baptist congregations), today called "congregationalists." The "first organized independent church" can refer only to one with strong Calvinistic leanings; for by that time Helwyth was already in London with his church.

96 Now "Kassel, Verlagshaus der Baptisten." (Baptist Publishing House.)

97 Denner's book of sermons was owned by the author's parents around 1860 and was otherwise known among the Mennonites in Russia.

98 From then until 1789, when the first Mennonites from the Danzig area and from Prussia emigrated to Russia, "old books, in which immersion is discussed," as the old brethren always contended, could therefore very well have been in the possession of some. If Denner and Cornelius Ris (**Glaubenslehre**) were confused with Menno, then the confusion could be attributed to the mistakes of unlearned people. Moreover, some older brethren insisted that there had been "Mennonite books" from Holland among them "in which there were clear references [to immersion]" and these books were evidently taken along to America!?

99 The "Orthodox" Wing. Cf. above, #9.(d).

100 Compare above, #19: "Isaak Peters."

101 Naturally, this title only intended to convey the meaning that the book contained the essential teachings of the twelve apostles, not that they were the authors in the same sense as they were the authors of the "Apostles' Confession of Faith." According to our informants, it is the oldest church ritual after apostolic times. Quoted by the church fathers, it was considered lost for a long time, until it was discovered by Bryennios.

102 As is commonly known, the author has been baptized only once and that upon faith in the Mennonite Brethren Church.

103 For the spiritually sober and moderate Christian who is not a literalist, does not the manifold meaning of the Greek word, by means of which the Lord gave His command to the nations, suggest the following notion: "Baptism" is an allegorical or symbolic act in which water is applied, which generally dramatizes the concept of "cleansing through washing?" As the above impartial and completely objective research indicates, immersion—entirely in keeping with the drastic and vigorously graphic outlook of southern and oriental peoples—was deemed of first importance. How could one imagine that an apostle in the Sahara, the Lybian, or Arabian desert, could have urged a baptismal candidate to travel hundreds of versts with him to find a sufficiently deep spring (or stream) for baptism by immersion? Or postponed baptism in Greenland until the ice broke up? Could we not, with full justification, interpret the words "wash yourselves, cleanse yourselves, put your evil nature away from you" to mean spiritual

cleansing portrayed through any mode of bodily cleansing by means of water? All Jewish ritual water cleansings of the whole body, the hands and feet, clothes, and utensils is signified in theological language by means of the Greek word "Baptismata"—"immersions" (we apologize for this barbaric translation!), washing-cleansing with the aid of water. This mild expedient, free from excessive zeal and suitable for all situations of life, is perhaps also indicated in **The Teachings of the Apostles.** To us, this seems to be in keeping with pure apostolic teaching.

104 If they have as yet not been baptized.

105 Only such can judge spiritual matters spiritually, and only to such are our reproaches addressed.

106 What about the thief on the cross?

107 In the two Russian translations, the one by Wiener and the other by the Holy Synod, "in" appears in Matthew 3:11 and John 1:26, and "with" appears in Mark 1:8 and Acts 1:5. The same is true of the **English Revised** and the German **Calwer** translations. The latter two translations originate from the churches practicing sprinkling, that is, from members of such churches.

108 This argument should be carefully noted: see our footnote above at #136, 8, but, according to our honest conviction, in such a way as to allow pouring or sprinkling to be considered a recognized form of baptism as well, alongside the normal and original form, on the basis of the manifold meaning of the Greek word "baptizein." Had the need arisen, we should have baptized without further hesitation even our "Mennonite malefactor" (cf. our brochures with the same title, Halbstadt, "Raduga," 1909), converting for that purpose our small travelling communion cup into a baptismal font and baptising therewith, even though we have never to this day conducted a baptism other than by immersion. And this we would have done repeatedly even in cases where we were yielding, if reluctantly, to a person's irrestistible desire, arising from his own knowledge and inner need, and to his request, which desire and request might themselves be regarded as tantamount to actual baptism ("even if" . . ., etc.). Nevertheless, in no case would we have wanted to negate a first baptism, but only to complete it according to the request of the baptismal candidate and in the sense of normal baptism. Thus the author declared, before the open baptismal font in Odessa as well as at other occasions, explaining specifically that no Word of God which is read, prayed or spoken, no honest wish or sigh uttered in prayer by the participants, has been lost or destroyed, and that, however, whatever was lacking in the baptismal in respect to clarity, faith, and form, according to the candidate's confession and needs, could not be added (deeper faith, etc.) and (in respect to the baptism ceremony) be carried out. Therefore the author had to reassure a Jewish couple which could not find peace in regard to their baptism by sprinkling seven years earlier because, quite in accordance with Hebrew conceptions, they could conceive only of "baptism-under-the-water." I was able to reassure them with the explanation that their baptismal and convenantal vow to Christ and His church seven years earlier had been declared, and accepted on God's part, and that I would not even record the baptism ("by immersion"), nor add their names to my church register. Today, both are at peace and consider their immersion as nothing peculiar, except that it represents the completion of a holy symbol conceived according to their language and ritual. As far as the author personally is concerned, it would be quite sufficient to "complete baptism" through a word of explanation, prayer, and the laying on of hands, in all cases where it can be shown that water was applied to the person in a solemn manner in the name of the Holy Trinity. We know full well that this is neither (old) Mennonite nor Baptist (and our entire view and every practice is neither Lutheran nor Greek), but we know before God that we are not slave to any "ism" of this world. As far as our radical "completion of baptism" for the sake of the baptismal candidate is concerned, we wish to say only that the Protestant churches today practice "rebaptism without water" in confirmation or in the renewal of the "baptismal covenant" (an "innovation" coming long after the Reformation): See Flacius, above #13, b and Meusel, **Kirchliches Handlexikon**—"Bohemian Brethren" and **Calwer Kirchenlexikon,** "Konfirmation." The Greek Church (Constantinopolitan and Athenian, etc., Sprengels) repeats every Catholic and Protestant baptism by sprinkling with immersion, and apart from confirmation. The Greek (Orthodox) Church of Russia

supplements the baptism of Protestants and Catholics (if no confirmation has taken place) only by means of an anointing with the "Chrism" (confirmation) and prayers of purification from the Schism or the "Heresy" (since Peter the Great). The crown princess of Greece, sister to the German Emperor, was rebaptized in Athens upon demand of the highest ecclesiastical authority, much to the mortification of one participating party. NB! Confirmation involves the anointing with "Chrism," an oil prepared by the bishop for the ritual, and the laying on of hands (Acts 8) and is extended in the Roman Church only by the bishop and only to some Catholics. In the Greek Church, confirmation is carried out by the priest immediately after the baptism. Many Baptist churches and all Mennonite Brethren churches, as well as certain other churches, lay hands on the candidate right after every baptism, at any rate before the first communion service. The other Baptists, as well as the Old Mennonite churches, extend the "hand of fellowship." For a variety of reasons we think it well to have said these things, but neither to please nor to offend anyone.

109 Since we do not have Menno's **Complete Works** at our disposal at the moment, we cite the quoted passage from Menno's **Fundamentals** (in a new edition coming from the first third of the 19th century), Book I, page 47, wherein Menno writes against child baptism: ". . . all who teach others to trust in a few words, elements, or works, are fashioning, together with Aaron, a golden calf and permit simple-minded people to commit . . . abomination with it." N.B.! As a rule, the immersionists do not place emphasis upon the act of baptism, in terms of its "influence" or its element (water), but simply consider it as signifying a vow given in humble obedience and in a manner which has been commanded by God.

110 This is directed against our so-called "Alliance-notion." Of course, we understand the one universal Christian church, the fellowship of the saints, to signify not the historical structures as such but "the children of God who are [still] scattered," John 10:16; 11:52, in all places where Christ is still presented as Redeemer, Teacher and King, and where the power of grace is still at work. These "children of God" are the "little flock." Often they gather together in small yet distinctive groups, with more or less success and blessing: as Mennonites, Moravian Brethren, Baptists, Methodist, etc. The final result of all of this "will be revealed in that day."

111 Compare ##51 and 52. It was because of such "enticing" in the colony of Hoffnungstal in the Odessa District that a complaint was lodged against J. Lange before the Molotschna Colony inspector at Prischib.

112 This "once again" is probably a reference to the events in Kronsweide.

113 Thus the devout craftsmen families Born, Weiss, Fiek and perhaps also others were forced to leave the colony of Chortitza. They moved into the nearby city of Alexandrovsk and other places.

114 We are deleting and adding from various sources as necessary.

115 This "moreover" is an energetic rejection of the accusation contained in the "questions" that they preached that "their baptism cleansed them from all sins already done and from all those which they might please to do in the future, and that without any contrition."

116 Up to this point! A little while later, between 1862 and 1864, three or four persons from the Orthdox Church were baptized by the Einlage and Molotschna brethren (by Gerhard Wieler and Abram Dyck). Another case occurred in 1868. In 1865 the congregation decided that since they could not teach the Russians (because of a lack of knowledge of their language) then it did not have the right to baptize them either. Later: the Russians have their own church establishment and should take care of themselves; nonetheless, the believers among the Russian Christians were considered to be our brothers. The well-known work of the late Johann Wieler did not take place in connection with the M.B. Church, indeed it took place with the formal refusal on the part of the annual meeting of the M.B. Church in Friedensfeld in May of 1883 (to grant its consent). This was confirmed on June 10, 1898, in the Historical Commission meeting in Andreasfeld by Elder Aron Lepp, Elder J. Janz of Friedensfeld and the committee member, J. Philipp Isaak, in response to questions by the author. Let this be said to

justify or accuse the M.B. Church—it is a fact.

117 Thus above, XX: "Baptism in the M.B. Church"—Menno.

118 Our italics.

119 His unthreshed grain, a part of his salary.

120 A small chronological error! See the "Documentary Supplement" below, Claassen's petition, etc.

121 There are those puritans (**Kleinegemeinde**) in the M.B. Church today [around 1890] who become agitated because of the bridal veil worn by young women during the wedding ceremony, thus denying them their symbol, while demanding strict use of the symbolic covering for married women (signifying the authority over her), I Cor. 11.

122 Brother Neufeld acknowledged and confessed in a most humble manner his error at this time and did his utmost to rectify matters again, as witnesses who saw and heard him have told us. He came to brethren who stuck stubbornly to their errors on his knees, even hunting up some of them in the fields, pleading with them to abandon their ideas and become reconciled to the "Ungerites." Nevertheless, later, while living in Stavropol, he again brought confusion into the church by reviving the old movement's ideas in the Kuban congregation.

123 Was this question completely answered and completely lucid and rational in an evangelical sense? As a supplement, see his third answer under "Rules of the Elders."

124 The command of the Lord is positive and clear—but our "flesh is weak!" This also applies to the penultimate sentence!

125 The poor fellow was forced to write this for the sake of the majority! Compare this with his own opinion under #189, "Documentary Supplements," in his letter of Feb. 4, 1865.

126 "Dogma" simply means "theological opinion," "teaching," "doctrine."

127 Johann Claassen and his Christian friends had already had sweet fellowship with him in St. Petersburg.

128 He was temporarily stationed there by his commander to settle the issues concerning the Brethren.

129 Pastor Dobbert's report of July, 1864, had also been sent to Brun (as one may gather from events and from verbal communications) and had served a useful purpose in the interests of the Brethren.

130 Neufeld had, as we know, subjected himself entirely to the guidance of B. Becker (his son-in-law) and G. Wieler. Becker was currently in the Kuban area; G. Wieler, after being released from prison, soon left for the Molotschna, as one may deduce from Chapter XVIII, above.

131 One cannot fail to notice that the casting of the lots does not always proceed solemnly, nor with the spiritual atmosphere that was present in June 27, 1865, in Gnadenheim, when Heinrich Huebert was selected by lot. As far as we know, the M.B. Church has never resorted to this practice again when such questions were to be decided.

132 Johann Wieler was not present at the time, since he had taken a position as teacher in Berdiansk.

133 See Heinrich Huebert's judgment above in "Pastor Wuest."

134 Heinrich Huebert relates in his "Recollections" the following: ". . . On this trip we also discovered the plans the local authority had decided on concerning us. Johann Claassen, who for the guidance of our matter was right in the forefront, was also to be imprisoned; then,—this was the hope of the colonial authorities—the whole matter could be liquidated in fourteen days. But that is not how He planned it, who sits above and rules the whole world, for He had thoughts of peace for us and our people. Quietly pondering, we travelled home, when suddenly Claassen asked me: 'Do you know what must be done?' and pointed with his hand north and said: 'It is time to turn in that

direction. Do you understand? But don't ask any questions now, in order that you may be free to defend yourself.' I understood immediately and kept it to myself. Br. Claassen . . after he had revealed his plans to his brother-in-law and to his wife—and since, as a businessman, he possessed a passport, started out at night to Kharkov, riding a horse. . . ."

135 This submitted document is the "first draft," the original copy was, as far as we know, sent to the church elders by Huebert.

136 The name is crossed out in the first copy. Claassen and Cornelsen, as well as Koop, were not on the list. We are convinced that the course of the church would have been more wholesome if Cornelsen had become the leading minister i.e., elder, and Claassen and Huebert his first co-workers. According to everyone, Cornelsen had the equanimity and sobriety of an elder according to good Mennonite conception, more firmness than Huebert; Claassen more than a match for all in his political vision, talented with fire and perseverance, was perhaps not of the calibre of an elder in the Mennonite sense of that time, yet he was a decisive factor in the church, and the actual leader in the storm of the battle. For that reason Cornelsen, the quiet, controlled man, would have been more suitable as the standing chairman and director of the daily business and worship of the church or "elder" in the Mennonite sense. Huebert, more of a theologian than all of the others, and a deep and quiet teacher, need not prematurely have spent his strength in the partly fruitless work as leader and administrator, which was foreign to his nature and spiritual bent. The act of Feb. 10 was decisively and profoundly detrimental, particularly because through it Cornelsen and Claassen were not given their proper positions, others though, who were not sufficiently qualified, occupied these, and then later had to relinquish them after they and the church by this mistake had suffered considerable harm, as we know. And this is so in spite of Claassen's wise and humble—and surely honestly expressed—explanation before the election (letter Apr. 19, 1866): "whether they would elect (three of) us, or we would work in the church as brethren, is all the same (why did God then "appoint in the church some as apostles . . . pastors . . . teachers" etc. if it is "all the same"?), and since we were of the first that seceded, we were kept from becoming arrogant" (?!). This justification was based on an unsound foundation originating from weak courage and not in the full sense of the word from honest expectation of Feb. 10. As the three signatories represented the whole church, so the whole church shared in the blame and the suffering of this false step. One need only remember the consequences of every deviation from the perfect will of God contrary to better knowledge or out of culpable ignorance of the leaders in the household of the old covenant people, as well as of those of the whole history of the Christian church. The slightest deviation from the right direction, especially with young organizations, leads to greater aberrations. It is well, if after a short time one succeeds to break the direction and to return by the best way possible ("June minutes" 1865). This seldom succeeds completely. And if it succeeds "to turn about," time and energy has been wasted, which could well have been used for advancement and growth, and one can never completely erase the harm to people. (Moses, Aron, David.) Apparently neither the three nor the church of that day have completely realized their error. The tangibly greatest harm for the young church was Abraham Cornelsen being completely forced into the background, making him inactive for years.

137 The members of the family and sympathizers are included with the 18 family heads who united on Jan. 6, 1860, to sign the important document. On the date of this petition there were already 50 family heads affiliated with the new church. New Year's 1861 there were already 102 adult members of both sexes with some 40 family heads.

138 Here are the documents: Statement of Secession, Jan. 6; explanation of affiliation of nine members from Gnadenfeld on Jan. 18; and the selection of ministers, May 30, 1860. Among the "special teachers" the three appointed members, Claassen, Cornelsen and Koop.

139 Because Matthies had been banned.

140 Owners of large and small farms.

141 Owners of houses without land.

142 Mennonites who were renters.

143 His first arrival on March, 1860, is meant here.

144 Page 264 in German translation: ". . . The sincere zeal, which they manifest in their commitment to their doctrine, made impartial eye witnesses frequently remark 'Not the leapers but the other Mennonites have denied their first teacher . . .'."

145 The Evangelical Moravian Brethren Church in Russia had the legal right to have an agent in St. Petersburg. He represented the brethren before the authorities and could actually make personal representations to the Tsar (Klaus, **Unsere Kolonien**, p. 115). His residence had the advantages of a Protestant church building. Pastor Nielsen in his time was an "agent," as Pastor Hans was later, who in the 70s showed the Mennonites so much consideration during their efforts in the matter of conscription.

146 Via Berdiansk to W. Bartel.

147 That is how they designated the sober, Christian way of life of the Baptists of that time.

148 It really is not possible to praise Nielsen's Christian character and his brotherliness too highly. According to his religious persuasion he is an opponent of the brethren, and yet he counsels them in a "fatherly" and "brotherly" way. Naturally he is unable to grasp the essence of Mennonite distinctiveness and rights.

149 The idea of spreading the Gospel to other circles.

150 He teaches his servant and maid to read the Gospel in Russian.

151 Cf. #151.

152 The conversation was naturally carried on in Low German.

153 The lettering of parts a, b, etc. and the emphasis are those of the author.

154 Compare above #17, "Isaac Peters."

155 The original has "1859" as error. Wuest died July 3, 1859.

156 Compare our evaluation of Kappes above in #77, etc.

157 These quotation marks occur in the original: on what grounds? Compare XVIII and in the "June Reform" the condemnation of the "doctrine of freedom" by the M.B. Church, and "Answers," May 7, 1862, in #141.

158 Compare #82(2).

159 Not correctly quoted!

160 Compare minister Johann Martens' letter to the **Mennonitische Blaetter** in #84(2), above.

161 Compare footnote to "First Election of Ministers," XVI.

162 Compare #95.

163 It was not really defined so precisely! But the unwise, improper, and offensive action, which the M.B. Church, as also Lenzmann, has condemned for over 45 years, did occur repeatedly. Thus Mrs. Gertrude Reimer, Liebenau, Claassen's sister-in-law, writes to Claassen in St. Petersburg on March 2, 1862, that Brother Gerhard Wieler had washed the feet of eight sisters (three of the most honorable married women and five single girls) and three brethren, and then they had received communion. She writes quite naively about it. Mrs. Claassen, too, writes to her husband on April 9, 1862: "It seems as though the love [between her and her brother Jakob Reimer of Gnadenfeld] has suffered a break. . . . He again seems to be more satisfied with the brethren than he was; the major point to him seems to be that of mixed washing of feet; the brethren have promised to refrain from that." She does not go into further detail about it; Claassen does not respond either.

164 These "pastoral letters" were also sold as brochures. In the samples distributed by the party of five elders in the Molotschna Mennonite colony, the last section which eloquently defended infant baptism had a piece of paper carefully glued over it.

165 See XVIII, "Doctrine of Freedom" and its condemnation by the M.B. Church.

166 What about Father Menno?

167 This strange man who wanted to examine the children in one Mennonite school with Luther's "Small Catechism" [the author was one of the students], attempted to subordinate the Mennonites to the Evangelical Lutheran Consistory and to make the Mennonite Council of Church Leaders a subsidiary of the same. Allegedly, some Mennonite elders here and there accepted the idea. But soon the Mennonite spirit asserted its identity. See above #160, "Council of Church Leaders" according to A. Klaus, and below #172, "Minutes of another Meeting."

168 An act of demon exorcism in connection with child baptism.

169 According to the Gnadenfeld **Chronicle**, this custom had already been adopted by the church in Brenkenhofswalde through its association with the Moravian Brethren Church. Perhaps the practice was restored through the influence of Wuest? Compare IX, "Gnadenfeld" above.

170 The "forgery."

171 Church division.

172 From 1860 to 1864.

173 Sins; offences.

174 All parentheses are those of Pastor Dobbert.

175 Compare Pastor Dobbert's **Lutherisches kirchliches Bedenken** (Lutheran Church Considerations) with our footnote to #157: "List of Candidates," Document of February 10, 1860 and Claassen's **Darlegung der Mennonitischen Rechte** (Presentation of Mennonite Rights) in respect to free church establishment in his petition to the Tsar of May 1862.

176 Quite contrary to Pastor Dobbert, we find that Benjamin Becker here exhibited apostolic courage and is only to be praised in respect to his action as over against the momentary weakness of the three deputies on February 10, 1860.

177 Compare Lenzmann's letter, 13 above, (X).

178 Thus in the document.

179 Thus in two copies in the handwriting of Elder Huebert and minister Frank Isaak.

180 That is, his "Diary Excerpts."

181 The extant copy in Gerhard Wieler's handwriting carries the original individual signatures.

182 At that time there was considerable agitation in the congregations concerning the "consistorial" plan which was ascribed to the Council of Church Leaders, cf. above Klaus, **Kirchenkonvent** and Keller, **Konsistorium**, and a certain tendency in favor of religious freedom began to manifest itself in the large masses under the influences of Ohrloff, the brethren and the Templers. At the same time, an increasing displeasure with Friesen, the Area Administrative Officer, especially among the landless and their friends, manifested itself. The "expulsion," as a civil act, would have had to have taken place in the local village congregations, and Friesen was by no means all-powerful there any longer and the influence of the respective elders was not powerful enough. At the same time, Claassen had acquired a certain sympathy as a pioneer through his success in regard to the land question in St. Petersburg and in the Caucasus.

183 The same version is contained in two copies.

184 Highly interesting.

185 The same version is contained in two copies.

186 N.B.!

187 Founder and hitherto elder of the "Hermann Peters Congregation."

188 Earlier one wrote "Delesky," "Delasky," or "De Lasky."

189 This expression clearly and concisely confirms Claassen's earlier representation of the brethren.

190 "Jaab."

191 "Heindrich."

192 In a moment of enthusiasm for the Russian fatherland around 1890, all of the colonies in the Chortitza district, with the exception of Chortitza itself, a name that is already Russian, were given new Russian names. Thus Einlage is now called "Kitschkas" by the people.

193 Brothers of Gerhard and Johann Wieler.

194 Of Claassen, as of G. Wieler, it is asserted that he never went beyond happy gestures and calls of "Hallelujah," and always maintained a friendly, joyful dignity.

195 Both statements in the parentheses were written by Reimer. He made the comments in an excerpt taken from his diary and intended for the author.

196 Since the names are of no consequence, we do not write them out in full. Some are simply indicated by "N."

197 This sister, who had sinned in the evil time from 1861/62, confessed her sin, but also insisted that B. Becker, J. Becker and their two associates, because of their teachings and their example in their perilous, unrestrained brotherly behavior, were also guilty in the matter of her fall into sin. The mentioned brethren in Kakbass agreed with this and held that the sister, together with those who shared her guilt, had been punished enough.

198 Who obviously now had adopted a milder position. Earlier, as one of those most given to excessive exuberance, he had been one of the supporters of rigorous banning. We are repeatedly reminded of Leonhard Bouwens and his associates who threatened Menno with the ban because he was too gentle in exercising the ban.

199 In that order!

200 At that time he was moving closer to the Friends of Jerusalem.

201 See his following letter and our comments.

202 This "apostolic" epistle, apart from its unfairness and faulty manner of expression, should in its spiritual shortsightedness, narrow-mindedness, and unkindness, be compared with the "episcopal" letter of March 16, 1863, even if the two have a completely different ecclesiastical emphasis. They have a similar birth.

203 He was the first initiator of the purchase and remodelling of the former tavern.

204 Yes, that was beautiful. The Lord could be present here, but not amidst the "rejoicing and jubilation" (that is, the frenzied actions) in the night of mental torment on December 18-19 in Gnadenfeld (cf. Elias at Mt. Carmel!). A time of continuous anxiety and "tormented joy"—that is how dozens of contemporaries, once sincere participants, but now horrified by the memories of those days, describe the events of the "mad year" 1864-65 when the "spiritual" urges became religious madness. "We had to participate; otherwise, we would have been placed under the ban, which, we believed, would have caused us to be lost." The psychological influence of the leaders worked like magic: even Huebert repeatedly succumbed to their influence and this fear of the ban, even though he was their superior in profound thinking, in his genial nature, and in his wide reading, which was comparable to having received a good education. With his vigorous courage and readiness for battle he had exactly those qualities which he lacked when he was a bishop! Even Jakob Reimer, with his much more independent character, was afraid in this situation. The author remembers how, in his youth, he was impressed by the influence of these persons, even though as a boy he had an almost insurmountable antagonism toward, and scorn for, the excesses and their dire consequences.

205 Compare Johann Wieler's letter of February 1865.

206 Whenever only "Benjamin" is written, Benjamin Becker is always meant.

207 The situation in which the now deceased, venerable Huebert found himself was terrible! Witnesses of these events, Elder Daniel Fast and others, have described them to us in terms even more drastic and painful, so that we are filled with anger and sympathy. But it is also clear that God allowed the dear man to be punished for his inconstancy and frequent inactivity (although his poor health often justified his position). That these

events occurred in front of the whole congregation, which included the very young and the totally inexperienced, and that they involved blows with clubs and whips of scorpions was the sin of those who had control in the congregation. They were punished in the "June Reform," and the congregation, which had allowed itself and its shepherds to be thus tyrannized was punished by the bitter gall it drank in these months of the "mad year." Certainly elders are to be subjected to the judgment of the church. At such times, however (unless the congregation has a good number of mature, united—amongst themselves and with the congregation—ministers) elders of other independent congregations should be present. Such a situation should involve the larger leadership of the congregation (the "church council" in the M.B. Church). Young, spiritually immature, and weak members of the congregation will be hurt for life if such things are done openly, and the congregation will suffer for decades from a running sore. We speak from tragic experience. While still young and immature, we had to participate too much in congregational actions which should have been reserved for the "wise and prudent." Concerning Huebert as an elder, see footnote to the "First Election of Ministers," #157.

208 A mechanically-reproduced small monthly paper, which he produced for a few years.

209 With the "din of wooden shoes," he [J. W.] angrily writes to Claassen in a letter of February 4, 1865, concerning this "free movement."

210 In the interests of easier orientation, we have given this title to the document.

211 One should remember the "hard banners" in the latter part of Menno's life.

212 N.B.! At that time, he had been in prison for about half a year.

213 The weak, sickly man with his seriously ill wife, and such "helpers" as he had. But see the footnote to "First Election of Ministers," #157.

214 See #191 (2); comment on "jubilation."

215 Benjamin Becker, who, in his "epistle of thunder," in the end of 1864 and the beginning of 1865, very freely exposes everyone's moral shortcomings, never brings a moral accusation against Reimer; he is charged only with "false teachings" and fellowship with brethren who have been banned. Concerning Claassen's dissatisfaction with Reimer, see the latter's diary under 13: "Reconciliation."

216 This "accord and gaining of mutual love" occurred. In the documents of Elder Huebert, August, 1868: "Brief Exposition," Br. Reimer is officially designated as "minister." He was thus given full recognition in terms of membership and office.

217 Concerning this we have no document among our numerous sources.

218 It is noteworthy that no reference is made to bookburning. According to Elder Daniel Fast and others, this matter was done away with at that time.

219 Gnadenheim, June 1, 2; Blumstein, June 12, 13; and Gnadenheim, June 26, 27.

220 In the "unbalanced year," winter, 1861-62; section XVIII.

221 More accurately, "in the fourth year."

222 In the settlements in Old Samara, Alexandertal, Koeppental, and Ohrloff have accordions in their churches.

223 His second wife, Miss Maria Epp of Blumenort, whom he, a widower for some time already, married shortly before his incarceration.

224 Delegated by the Minister of the Interior to investigate the case of the "seceded." Cf. #152 above.

225 And Kronsweide.

226 Were all not "seceding" Mennonites then only "brethren according to the flesh?" Oh, the spiritual narrowness among these men even at that time! Cf. **Confession of Faith**, 1900/02, page 5, line 12. See also "Diary," below, #16.

227 The world! The world! Were Bernhard Harder and hundreds of non-members of the M.B. Church the "world?" See what is said about Luther and others on p. 16 of "Diary," etc., the large footnote and in the letter of Daniel Fast and associates. How much

deeper and wider is the recognition of other Christians expressed there! Were people shocked by the open-mindedness expressed a half year earlier? Jantz and Schmidt indeed belonged to the group which wrote the paper of April 1, 1865.

228 At that time it was hoped that this was the case.

229 Regrettably, it broke out again during this winter in the schism led by Hermann Peters, among others. Cf. further "Diary," etc.

230 Gerhard Wieler and Heinrich Huebert.

231 Ekaterinoslav, where Brun resided for some time.

232 This gap is in the original.

233 He was released the following November, 1865.

234 All the places named here are colonies of the "Molotschna Mennonite District," the present volosts of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld, with the exception of Nassau.

235 Here then, the not seceded Claassen was not "world" and "brother according to the flesh."

236 Compare his letter of July 1862 above, XVII.

237 We leave out the less important material.

238 Later minister of the Halbstadt and then of the Sagradovka Mennonite congregations.

239 Father-in-law of the author.

240 Compare above with regard to "Tobias Voth."

241 Later intinerant minister Johann J. Fast of Rueckenau.

242 Peter P.S.; cf. above #51: "Brotherhood." At the time of this visit a member of the Ohrloff congregation; later the first Mennonite semstvo teacher. Because he lost his position in Muensterberg, 1872, for joining the M.B. Church, he became teacher of the Russian language at the semstvo school in Neu-Hoffnungstal, Pastor Wuest's earlier parish, and in other places. Till the end, he was active as a teacher. He was one of the "meeting leaders" of the Gnadenfeld and Wuest periods; one of the first profoundly influential "teachers of godliness" for the author aside from his mother; in like manner his first guide in the pedagogical profession and a systematic teacher of the Russian language, which he, S., raised in Prussia, learned when a man. He died in the seventy-eighth year of his life, injured by the fire which destroyed his own house in Lichtfelde. He died in the Muntau hospital, whispering the words, "One thing has brought us through, lamb, that you were slain!" To his last breath, Wuest's gospel remained his.

243 The teacher of elders Abraham and David Schellenberg. From 1870 onwards secretary of the Halbstadt Area Administrative Office, he, together with district officer Toews and others, contributed a great deal toward the equality of the M.B. Church with regard to civil matters. He caused the author to enter the secondary school in Halbstadt (1870) as a scholarship student.

244 Aside from an excellent joiner's workshop and lumber yard.

245 This is proven by the jubilation which, as Br. Becker recounts in two letters, broke out in the night of Dec. 18 & 19, 1864, as the attempt to remove Huebert from his post proved unsuccessful (even though only because of Huebert's confession which was not motivated purely by the spirit of truth and was less than worthy), although the attempt to remove him was successful several months later, and by the great joyous outburst amidst prayers, tears, and exhilaration, documented in the June Reforms, the lot drawn for Huebert, which stated "You shall again serve in the office appointed you by God."

246 But it is difficult to understand how N. Schmidt and those sharing his thinking, did not understand that their ideals had to be realized in the Mennonite Brethren Church, not in the "Temple." But the epistles, the actual teaching of the "Temple," first came much later.

247 Reimer was indeed the breaker upon which the wave of emotionalism of the exuberant movement foundered even though they wished to, and almost did, crush him. Reimer was more passive, while Claassen acted with force. Concerning Reimer's strict attitude towards baptism cf. XX, "Baptism in the M.B. Church," #131,b.

248 The author did not attend the service.

249 According to the recommendation of Elder David Duerksen, Schoental.

250 This name is not an appropriate one for our situation. The designation "station" should be replaced by "department" or "branch" or by "affiliate church," which latter term appears in the notes of acknowledgement accompanying the Confession of Faith of 1900-02. A "station" is established in a heathen country, or describes a place of temporary sojourn. We should discard all unnecessary and foreign expressions in our church practice as well as the obscure term "Gemeindestunde," a bad translation of the English Free Church word for church meeting. We have the good Mennonite word "Bruderschaft" (brotherhood), and the somewhat more illuminating term "Brueder-beratung" (council of brethren), as it is commonly used in the Molotschna-Rueckenau Church. Everything which bears an unnecessarily strange sound eventually also acquires a needlessly foreign connotation.

251 In fact Unger had always been the "angel of the church," as all preceding events show, and remained such until his death even though he did not bear the name elder nor assume leadership during his last years (see further notes on the matter).

252 But not in the same condition! The Molotschna Church was at this time in very fine condition. It did not please God that the Molotschna Mennonite Brethren Church should need the help of the Baptists in respect to their church order. The latter is inherently Mennonite in origin and in its internal development.

253 Non-Mennonite.

254 Compare #201(2): "Corrections."

255 #96, Footnote.

256 We will discuss both of these churches in this chapter because they were intimately associated during this period because of the mutual influence of such men as Elder Huebert, who moved from one church to the other and travelled back and forth as his ministry demanded, Christian Schmidt (a minister), and Daniel Fast, as well, because of other close associations.

257 He passed away in 1902 as elder in America.

258 The specified period from 1866 to 1872 was characterized by major social upheavals in the Mennonite Molotschna—the "land dispute," the struggle between two parties for leadership in the Area Administrative Office, and major moves to acquire land in new settlements; buying, renting, share-cropping. Even the more religiously inclined suffered spiritually as a result.

259 In addition there were an undetermined number of members at the Nogai steppes (in the direction of Berdiansk), at the Mariopol Plan, at the Don, in the Crimea, in Friedensfeld, etc. We will not err significantly if we assume a minimum of one hundred members.

260 After a few years Father F. and his family became members of the M.B. Church.

261 In 1898 the General Conference of the Mennonite churches of the Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia transferred the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper to the ministers, in the absence of an elder, whenever a church so desired. The General Conference of 1903 in Petershagen decided to accept members from Rueckenau (that is, individuals who had been baptized in the M.B. Church) without prejudice if their ethical life otherwise did not hinder such action.

262 Five **de jure**, because Thomsen and Rempel represented one of the elders.

263 The Area Administrative Office was administered by Ohrloff members at this time.

264 The **Kleine Gemeinde**.

265 A few dates of this document go beyond our period of 1872.

266 This young brother, one of Claassen's most faithful friends and admirers, an enthusiastic settler in the Kuban and a promising church member, intelligent, of deep feeling and of strong will, was murdered by horse thieves (1868), leaving behind a young widow, Helene nee Friesen of Sparrau, the author's eldest sister, and a one-year-old son. The child also died soon. His widow married again, namely Br. Heinrich Friesen, minister in the M.B. Church of Friedensfeld (Miropol) in the district of Ekaterinoslav.

267 She, who for the sake of her husband and the congregation had to bear and renounce so much, died even before she could witness the coming to bloom of her colony and the security of her small children. Cornelius Reimer's wife Gertrude, nee Dyck of Pordenau, had to bear a similar lot of hardships in the Kuban. She also, torn away from a life with all conveniences, succumbed to the climate and privations in the new settlement. Many tears and heavy sighs have watered the way to the flourishing position of the M.B. Church and the ground of the settlement in the Kuban. Not a few early graves or at least broken lives (Huebert and his second wife, etc.) became the down-payment for the future growth of the congregation in general and the colony in particular.

268 Sometimes spelled "Leppke," at other times "Leppky" in the documents.

269 That is, fellowship in the worship service—preaching and prayer.

270 One should not consider the required examinations to be very accurate. Experience clearly teaches that He alone can judge the heart and the motives.

271 Obviously, unbelievers cannot judge spiritual things and are therefore not responsible either—that devolves upon "those who are spiritual."

272 According to Epp—therefore only by the Einlage Church?

273 Br. Unger hardly experienced the favorable outcome of this issue in this world—he passed away on March 12, 1880. The author clearly recalls "Unger's clear perception and calm friendliness during the discussion of this issue"—the last time that the author met him.

274 In order to understand this edition of the extant act, we take pleasure in copying the following notes by N.H.H. in the year 1897, which we received upon request. He was teacher of the seondary school at that time and is now teacher in the vocational school in Chortitza. Abraham Neufeld relates as follows: The marshall of the nobility, Malama, who was president of the Recruiting Commission, had either made or allowed an error at the financial expense of the Chortitza Church. J. D., as president of the administration of the (Mennonite) barracks, had requested and received compensation from the government and thereby had made himself and the Mennonites as a whole the enemies of Malama. Malama sought revenge by attempting to have the Mennonite Brethren categorized as Baptists. The Governor, desiring to show his loyalty, sought to remove their privileges. He had inquired of the elder what the differences were between the Mennonite Brethren and the other Mennonites and had advised him not to recognize the Mennonite Brethren. He also sent church statements to the villages which were to be signed and which would result in the excommunication of the Mennonite Brethren and their exile to Siberia. The villages, however, refused to sign such statements. Then the Governor made representation at the Ministry and received the familiar reply [Dec. 28, 1896]: The presentation must have been edited in such a way that it appeared that the initiative had come from the Mennonites, which was certainly not the case. They were directly questioned about the differences and the governor had hoped for a village resolution which would not recognize the brethren as Mennonites. The village, however, refused. The moral guilt lies entirely with the governor and Malama. [N.B.! A Mennonite has undoubtedly acted as an agent in these affairs, however.]

275 The Mennonite Confession vs. the Baptist Confession.

276 See #241(2).

277 Employees of his renowned wagon factory.

278 His son Abraham's wife, daughter of the deceased Br. Karl Benzien and his wife.

279 For a further characterization of Unger, see the account of his 1875 tour, #223 and #233 below.

280 Founded by the Molotschna brethren. The history of this brethren colony is described by incidents of the most tragic spiritual bankruptcy, literally according to the words of I Timothy 6:9-10. The "land hunger," a social illness of the Molotschna Mennonites since the 60s, which began as a justifiable need, also possessed many in the M.B. Church. Add to that the cheap pretence of wanting to establish a civic community more Christian and better than that at the Molotschna and the Kuban, and wanting to build the kingdom of God, and being able to give more if one were richer. Three brethren whose names had once been on the honor roll of Mennonite society, and on the list of hopefuls for various kinds of useful service in the M.B. Church, from the most honest and respected families, turned to darkness and moral disgrace in their personal lives. All are supposed to have repented before their death. God, who is righteous and merciful, is their judge. They will not be named here because we are not dealing with a principle, but with moral weakness which the church duly punished with all means at her disposal. It could not, however, cure the malady of greed for land, money, and high-risk business (manufacturing plants, factories, steam-powered mills, etc.) that frequently resulted in bankruptcy and dishonor, because they are rooted in the law of Romans 7, where Romans 8 cannot become law. We do not believe that purchasing land or manufacturing plants is sin, only the "greed" is: I Tim. 6:9. And the said history of church discipline in the Einlage Church was not concluded with the incident of the three from Blumenau and elsewhere: meaning especially blatant cases of sin. We always face the dangers of which the apostolic epistles give ample warning by their incidents and admonitions.

281 One-time school teacher in Huttertal (or Johannesruh?) and Neu-Halbstadt, etc., father of missionary sister Elise Neufeld.

282 The same is true of the reports about Nepliuievo, Friedensfeld, Sagradovka, etc.

283 In the Ekaterinoslav district, 15 versts from Nikopol, on the Dnieper River.

284 Especially of the Molotschna, the mother church of all M.B. churches.

285 Who changed his place of residence several times: Molotschna, Friedensfeld, Kuban.

286 Published by Inspector Rappard from St. Chrischona.

287 See also "Church in Turkestan" or "Emigrating Church," to be differentiated from the "Hermann Peters Brethren."

288 We see that despite his strict view of baptism, the deceased was a Christian with a wide, mellow sense of brotherhood, like few of his contemporaries.

289 In the construction of the church the following worked together with great enthusiasm in the circle of brethren: J. Wieler, secondary school teacher in Halbstadt, Johann Isaak, son of Philipp Isaak of Tiege, and also P. M. Friesen.

290 For the horses of church folk coming from distant points, a provision originally initiated by Philipp Isaak. Now this practice is finding favor among the churches of the general Mennonite group.

291 In 1908 the building was changed, that is, improved, to the extent that the pulpit was removed from the long wall on the north to the west end wall. The floor was raised at both ends and lowered in the middle. This placement of the pulpit has become customary in houses of prayer, both in the Mennonite Brethren Church and in the Mennonite Church (Petershagen, Schoensee, etc.). This is a departure from the West Prussian custom.

292 Beginning in 1900, sporadic emigration movements took place in the Chortitza settlements, but it appears that all has become quiet again.

293 A number of members had already emigrated.

294 Fast succeeded neither Huebert nor Schellenberg. He was unable to be elder indefinitely because of great physical weakness and a strong disinclination towards public functioning because of an overly-timid spirit, which, however, could be transformed into

the courage of a lion when it became necessary to defend the truth and the honor of God. His gift of grace was, so to speak, that of the confessor, the unobtrusive care of souls and the giving of counsel, and a holy walk. For this reason he was called the "mother of the church." He was a genuine badge of honor for the M.B. Church. Formerly he had been uncommonly narrow and intolerant, but later he was most open-hearted and characterized by gentle brotherliness.

295 This was, thank God, following erroneous opinion and fear, a prophetic premonition.

296 Many "Russian brethren" appeared at the time in response to Br. Johann J. Wieler's invitation. By that time a number of Russian churches had been recognized as "Baptists" by the governors in virtue of the confirmation of their elders and ministers, according to the law of 1879 (article 1106 ff., B. 11, T.I); e.g. Bogdonov from Vladikavkas, Andrey Markovitsch Masaiev from Tiflis, who were present among those in Rueckenau. Later it was declared that the 1879 law applied only to Germans. The Russians present were therefore adherents of a Protestant sister church, and their reception as guests was fully legal. The orthodox missionary H. Kalnev of Odessa wrote publicly at one time that P. M. Friesen had declared in writing that he had nothing in common with the "Stundists." Kalnev reported that Friesen had, however, taken part in the congress of "Stundists" in Rueckenau and therefore had not written with full honesty. Friesen had written: "Since the government has declared the Russian Baptists an illegal sect in saying they are 'Stundists,' and, because he (Friesen) is formally confirmed as a preacher, he has been obliged to break off relations in the public sector with them and has limited himself to private contacts only. Two-thirds of the 'Stundists,' however, are certainly as good Protestants as the Lutherans, Mennonites, Baptists." In a legal perspective, the congress in Rueckenau had been a purely Mennonite gathering, the Russians attending there "at that time" as Protestants (Baptists). The Rueckenau conference of 1882: after this the law according Baptist status to the Russians was rescinded and Friesen became the pastor of the German Baptist Church in Odessa (1888). He wrote what Kalnev mentions in 1890 after that, to his sorrow, he had to break off all relations with the "Stundists," except for drinking tea together, and weeping, praying, and counseling together in the most private manner in homes. Friesen maintained this practice most rigorously until April 17, 1905. Mr. Pleve and Mrs. K. P. Pobedonoszev (whose documents concerning this are in Friesen's hands) and other administrators knew this very well and did not hold this against him. Friesen informed the appropriate authorities of his contacts with national evangelical Russians from time to time as he had opportunity, and in principle always tried to the best of his ability to bring God's will and that of the Tsar in harmony with one another; he also tried to bring together political caution, i.e. loyalty, and unfeigned love of the brethren. He rejected all religious double-dealing as being detrimental to all concerned.

297 Died in 1909 while elder of the Memrik-Kotliorevka Church.

298 In 1870 (?) the Colony, especially Claassen's home, was honored by the visit of His Gracious Highness Grand Duke Michail Nikolaievitsch.

299 This letter was evoked by a short article about Wuest in Abraham Kroeker's Family Almanac, where the "false movement" (Heinrich Huebert's words) was mentioned along with Claassen's name. The letter is written in defence of Claassen.

300 We add here that Claassen was always an enthusiastic admirer and faithful emulator of Cornies in all cultural endeavors. (He had served under Cornies on the village sheep farm as a youth. After graduating from secondary school, he served as supervisor.) For this reason Br. Hermann Peters and those who shared his sentiment opposed him sharply. Next to the Christian faith, model farming and good schools were his ideals in life.

301 In that the M.B. Church in its emergence directed the life-dynamic of the entire Mennonite brotherhood toward self-evaluation and renewed spiritual activity.

302 An attempt to renew the movement during the winter of 1864/65, cf. above "Dictatorial Rule" and "Excess of Joy," XVIII.

303 What a misconception!

304 Today altogether different!

305 Now something quite common among the Mennonites.

306 Since August 1906, German language teacher at the pedagogical secondary school in Halbstadt; before that area administrator of the Kuban Colony for two years, now landowner in Felsental.

307 Compare #96, footnote. Hereof we have written testimony by Elder Jantz in our sources.

308 Soon (1888) a solid meeting house was built in the central village, Tiege, which is the reason the church is called Tiege-Sagradovka.

309 According to the Don baptismal register, Johann Fitz was baptized in 1865.

310 The Russian law accords Mennonite privileges, including military exemption, only to the descendants of Mennonites who were Russian subjects before 1874.

311 And yet certain controversies existed between the church at Rueckenau and the General Conference regarding members practicing open communion.

312 Br. Dirksen was a fine solid carpenter by vocation; in his later life he was a farmer. He was born in Prussia and there received a village school education.

313 We would like to repeat in this connection the word of Johann Wieler (Letter of Feb. 4, 1865, XXV, C., Einlage Church), "Where do I base this method on God's Word?" Dirty laundry does not belong on the street.

314 These brethren later joined the Baptists.

315 Conference of the Baptists. It is to be noted that brother J. J., an all out Mennonite Christian, nevertheless even until today unflinchingly has hearty fellowship with the Baptists and whenever possible attends their union meetings (conferences).

316 The first three submitted to ordination a second time after their approval (ordination) in the respective Mennonite churches. Minister Peter Unruh was the first one to have the manly courage to refuse categorically this second ordination to the ministry (practiced as a matter of principle by the M.B. Church). The author has sometimes asked leading brethren about this reordination, whether they did not wish to introduce a remarriage of newly accepted couples into the M.B. Church!

317 Poland especially has been visited frequently and willingly by the brethren Johann Jantz, Friedensfeld and Wilhelm Dyck, now in the Don territory.

318 Formerly Article 903; cf. complete Text of Law, etc., **Confession of Faith** 1900/1902 p. 57 and #55, 105, 214, and 214(2).

319 In recent times the national as well as the provincial authorities have repeatedly ruled that every premise intended for worship be registered with provincial authorities. This also applies according to newest regulations (Summer, 1910) to the schools which always and everywhere have been regarded as meeting houses for worship and prayer by all German colonists.

320 In this matter the now deceased Heinrich H. Reimer, Ohrloff, rendered kind assistance; also Count A. P. Bobrinsky with whom Friesen was acquainted from the time of his visit with the Russian evangelical brethren of St. Petersburg. Friesen's authorized co-worker in Simferopol was Johann Philipp Isaak of Tiege at that time.

321 These too had aroused the police as far as St. Petersburg.

323 See **Confession of Faith**, 1902, p. 33.

323 Without the beloved noisy fanfare and without the huge crowds of visitors! For comfortable and inspirational meetings the missions, harvest, and annual festivals (let us say church dedications)—John 10:25, etc., are appropriate. Today, 1910, entirely new and formal difficulties have appeared, which will continually be renewed, unless one learns to accept the traditional Mennonite quiet and simple manner, instead of imitating the example of foreign congregations, especially the Anglo-American free churches. This imitation confuses and agitates even the impartial administrators: the centuries-old

Mennonite hour for children or "Kinderlehre" (above #19c) has to be called "Sunday School," the spiritual teaching of the older youth group, "Juengling's or Jungfrauen Verein" instead of Bible Study for which the spiritual leaders of all denominations received the right and the mandate from the highest Russian authorities on May 2, 1881. (Cf. also Art. 440, Part I, Volume XI, lines 1-3.) A worship service enhanced by the singing of the choir has to be called "Song Fest," because one reads this in foreign newspapers.

324 Now minister of the Mennonite Church.

325 Probably the same as that which the author (#198) has designated as typical of the **Kleine Gemeinde.**

326 "Predestination" is equivalent to predetermination, preordination through God's gracious choice (see above, "Dutch Mennonites"). Br. Johann Siemens, too (usually Unger's opponent), was Spurgeonist to the core; he was the leader of the "prayer choir" at the meeting of 1876, where the "Baptist question" was dealt with. Nevertheless, Spurgeon has been one of the most beloved authors of the entire M.B. Church even to the most recent times. Johann J. Fast, Rueckenau, was continually edified and taught by his writings.

327 Elder David Duerksen has repeated this thought and expressed it as his own conviction.

328 His wife had predeceased him after a 50 year marriage by 2¾ years.

329 This is our expression, not Reimer's. He called the trees his "children" who had never caused him sorrow.

330 He writes to Claassen in St. Petersburg on March 8, 1861: ". . . For the mill I received 925 silver rubles, and for the house and lot, 3,300. One of the reasons for selling was that I still had debts of 650 rubles . . . and the patience of our creditors was running out. The world wants to have what is coming to it, and we sing, Give the world its own, all that belongs to it. (Here again his eschatological thinking is demonstrated to be his deepest motivation.) We can no longer doubt that the time has come of which it is written that no one will be permitted to buy or sell unless he has the sign of the beast, Rev. 13:7. Dear brother, In Isa. 66:19 it says, 'And I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, etc.' May we not regard it as directed to the children of God, as a sign for us that our gracious Sovereign has issued a call inviting us to relocate to the Amur region? Consider the words, 'I will send survivors.' Are not we the survivors who have left Babel in order not to be participants in her sins and sharers of her plagues? (Cf. brief exposition in #205 above.) To me, at least, it seems that the time has come to make attempts to get away from here. Perhaps before you receive this letter an answer will already be underway in regard to what your wife wrote you about the move to the Amur region. If you have not yet written, I would ask you to make all necessary inquiries whether it would not be more advantageous to travel by water than by land, and about a possible travel route. (Already a contract had been almost concluded with the captain of a Danish sailboat to take the brethren and their families and chattels to the Amur around South Africa!) Perhaps it is the will of God, our Father, that not all of us leave at once, but that a few lead the way. In that case I am one who, with his family, is prepared to leave already this year." Later it proved impossible to relocate 100 families to the very much closer Kuban region, which became the settlement location instead of the Amur! And the dear Huebert had to wait another eleven years before he could move. (See #218.) As a memorial we include a poem, one of several which he wrote while he was in prison in Tokmak:

(According to the melody, "Befiel Du Deine Wege.")

My Jesus, your ways
With your Zion people
Are only narrow paths,
And mostly strange.
Through tribulation and suffering
For your sake here,
Your way leads to joy
Which endures forever with you.

Therefore I keep saying
Courageously to my soul:
Your foes must fail;
They cannot attain rest.
I will trust God;
His word does not deceive me.
One day I shall see all
That He promises in it.

To sit in prison here,
Not knowing how long,
Depresses the soul
And brings fear to the heart.
Then my soul longs
To be at home with the Lord,
Where there will be fullness of joy
And beauty of life.

Jesus, help me carry
What You have laid on me!
Let me not despair
When depression strikes.
I want to cling to You;
I know no other alternative.
I will let You rule my affairs
Until I am in heaven with You.

Then the misery of this world
Will lie at my feet,
And I will enjoy the rest
Which is prepared for His people.
No tribulation, anxiety, or suffering,
And no sighing will be there.
Rather delight and joy
With God's heavenly hosts.

Soar beyond, my spirit,
To that place of rest.
Forget the sufferings here
And haste toward heaven,
Where Jesus, our life,
And our brothers
Already dwell in eternal bliss
Before God and His throne.

331 Other works he particularly treasured were those of Dr. (theol.) Johann Heinrich Kurtz, especially his **Bibel und Astronomie.** (This "farmer bishop," Huebert, had recognized what a great theologian, Zoeckler, later said of Kurtz's works: "In regard to content and structure, the most complete and thorough presentation of the time.") Other works: Herschel and others in astronomy and much in the natural sciences. In earlier years, especially in the early Ohrloff period, he read much of Jung-Stilling, but now he cited him only rarely as something apocryphal. Since the theological orthodoxy of the time was strictly Pietistic-Calvinistic-Baptist in nature, Stilling's ideas could be raised only in the spirit of cautious questioning! With deep respect and enthusiasm this author, as a youth between the ages of seventeen and twenty sat there drinking in what the deceased related, cited, and popularized out of the treasures of his knowledge of the Bible, theology, and other material learned by reading and observation. From worm to cherub, from dust and fog of the earth to the starry mist of the Milky Way ("which again and again is discovered to consist of sun systems, as telescopes become more powerful"), from the satanically infected son of Adam and his redemption through the second Adam, the most beautiful of the children of man, we climbed to heights and flew to distant places until we almost felt that we already were "what we will be" when we "see Him as He is."

Again we turned our eyes to the wonder of the microscope world in a drop of water, in the wing of a butterfly, in the stamen of a lily. Thus spoke Huebert, in his late fifties, or sixties, and thus this youth listened, sitting before him in a quiet room or beside him on the wagon-seat on the frequent drives across the fields. The hours and the roads were disgustingly short! Huebert became very well-read largely as a result of the lending library and reading club which had been established in Ohrloff by Tobias Voth and Johann Cornies. Such were the men Claassen, Reimer, Huebert, Christian Schmidt, Peter Siemens, these former organizers of house meetings. And all of them, more or less, had a little of the **Huepfer** in them! This inner disposition of these men, which many of their own people did not recognize, explains how these "fathers," fanciful and limited as they were in many respect, could produce what today is the Mennonite Brethren Church in the Mennonite world. They gave it the meaning which it has and which it is yet to have (if it will become more spiritual, more simple, in the sense of Jesus, and more sober-minded). These were the fathers for whom, together with their children, the council of elders and the civil authorities in the Molotschna Colony, in an official document, predicted "temporal and eternal destruction," labeled them as fanatic and lazy fellows and denied them passports in order to protect them (against their will) from total destruction. How petty, compared to the influence of these fathers, has been the influence upon the author of all that Switzerland, or Moscow, or the literature of various languages and eras, or theology, or philosophy, or politics, may have meant or may still mean to him! For the writer the determinative influence was what his mother and his eldest sister (both were members of Bible study groups and charter-sisters of the M.B. Church), together with the above-mentioned brethren and those associated with them, planted in him. That influence, though temporarily weakened and called into question, remained determinative, though it has since been modified and augmented. This basic influence was reinforced by the modest religious education given with direct biblical simplicity and warmth in the schools of Sparrau (Isaak Peters) and Steinbach (Peter Neufeld). In reverence, love, and gratitude we greet you, who are redeemed and have gone to be with the Lord, through Him and in Him in Whom all fullness dwells. We look for the reunion at the time which God has ordained, when we will be ultimately redeemed and cleansed through the power of His atoning blood which rescues even from judgment, as it is promised in I Cor. 3:11-15 and 2 Cor. 5:10!

332 He received 200 rubles annually from the Kuban Church, as did Elder Daniel Fast, and periodically small honorariums from the conference for his shorter preaching itineraries. As travelling minister he remained beloved by very many until his death.

333 The "Tempel Churches" of Russia, legally, have the official name and the rights of the Mennonite churches.

334 The difference resulted when in both villages the full farms were reduced in size in order to create small farms. Later, the village of Wohldemfuerst acquired two full farms belonging to Johann Claassen. These became communal property, and thereupon the size of the full farm operations was increased again to the original norm.

225 In all likelihood, these held property within the colony as well.

336 Such honors (medals, orders, etc.) were given for "merit" in pedagogy, agriculture, etc. The Kuban people are exceptional workers and very thrifty. Even the intelligentsia performs an astounding amount of physical labor, to the point of excess, and is characterized by thrift, while the farmer on the other hand is amazingly intelligent. Here the ideal of the soundest politicians of the future and of sociologists is already realized: "the intelligent village," the "union of intellectual and physical labor." Nothing more is needed here except a reasonable acknowledgement of the words, "But you are Christ's!" Without it, the settlement will become a kingdom of the god "Mammon," a seat of "Kulakism" (profiteers and robbers of peasants), or, in a new economic world-order, a socialistic heaven with the anti-Christ in the temple of God, even though this may not become evident in a pronounced form tomorrow or the day after. And yet, even today the Chief Shepherd has much reason to "judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep," (Ezek. 34:20). The area administrators of the Colony until 1904 were the following: 1) Cornelius Reimer; 2) Johann Claassen, 1869-72; 3) Jakob Giesbrecht, 1872-74; 4) Abram Wiens, 1874-88; 5) Jakob Giesbrecht, a second term, 1888-91;

6) Gerhard Friesen, 1891-94; 7) Heinrich Unruh, 1894-97; 8) Gerhard Friesen, a second term, 1897-1903; 9) David J. Claassen (formerly the principal teacher), 1903-06. All of these, with the exception of H. Unruh, were members of the M.B. Church. Mr. Unruh, a "Templer," had been one of the "Brethren" in his youth, one of the most prominent of the farmer-intelligentsia of this Colony, and a friend to the writer in his youth.

337 He died in 1908 (?) after a long, severe illness.

338 The author was at this time (September, 1886 to June, 1888) resident in the Kuban Colony. It was here that his wife joined the M.B. Church.

339 For a brief period he had been a minister in the recently founded Mennonite Church in the Colony.

340 The following documentary material may serve to illustrate the entire renewal, especially in regard to the school and to spiritual matters. 1) Here is a decision of the Wohldemfuerst community: "in the awareness that as good Russian subjects it is necessary for us to master the native language well, and knowing, too, how difficult it is for students to become thoroughly acquainted with two languages, we must make all necessary provisions that this end may be achieved. One such arrangement would be the construction of a third classroom at our school. This would make it possible for individual students to receive more personalized instruction. Since the opportunity for this is now present, in that the teachers, with the contributions of several friends of the school and the tuition fees of non-resident students, are offering to assume responsibility for the wages of a third teacher (!), the following agreement has been reached between the community of Wohldemfuerst and the teachers David Claassen and Johann Friesen, this 27th day of March, 1889: 1) The village community has agreed to enlarge the school to a three-room school provisionally for a five-year period. . . . [Here followed the statement of the responsibilities of the teachers, the arrangement for providing the salary of the third teacher, etc.] 8) Though the arrangement is being made provisionally for a five-year term, we hope that it will prove viable after that as well." (Signatures.) 2. Letters from David Claassen to P. M. Friesen: (Friesen had resigned from his service at the Halbstadt Secondary School [August, 1886], had resided in the Kuban Colony for almost two years, and was now serving as minister in the Odessa Baptist Church where he had been since June, 1888.) "Wohldemfuerst, March 26, 1889. Dear Friesen, Today the 'brethren' of Wohldemfuerst met at the house of Gerhard Friesen to consult regarding a third classroom in our school. The brethren unanimously favored the plan, for which I was very glad. Although the fields do not look promising, Br. Abram Peters [aged deacon of the M.B. Church, since then deceased], with tears in his eyes, expressed the firm hope that the dear God would not persistently give us lean years, and that if he had now chosen to discipline us, we ought not to lose heart and let a good cause lie untouched. One hundred forty rubles were pledged as voluntary contributions. . . . March 29. Dear Brother, All my mental and emotional faculties tell me that you really ought to be here now. The conditions of the community demand it. . . . The entire village assembly supported your appointment, and the brethren were enthusiastically in favor and anxious. I have frequently said to the 'Friends of Jerusalem' that we, in spite of our simple faith in 'the dear Saviour,' can and will do as much as they in the interests of culture and education, and that such faith is quite in keeping with progress. These people are now baffled that it is the 'Brethren' [who are dominant in the assembly and who initiated this project] who are arranging for a third classroom, and that this was not initiated by them! N.N. [formerly of the Brethren, and at that time a 'Templer'] is to have said that they have always strongly favored education, and that if the 'Brethren' now are encouraging this too, he would regard it as comical to ask for time to consider. . . . Also, he said that if he had known then what he knows now, he would not have left the Brethren. . . . I believe most assuredly that it is God's will that you come. We need to get a preparatory class for teachers and preachers going here so that through teachers and students we may prepare a leaven here for the leavening of our entire lukewarm Kuban Colony. I believe this third class will be a beginning. We must build a center here, if it is God's will, from which workers and other support can go forth in difficult times. Our situation is advantageous. Let us pray to God that this cause and your coming, or not coming, may be according to

His will! Lord, give us wisdom, so that our steps may be ordered according to Your holy will. Bless our undertakings! Amen." 3. A letter from Elder Daniel Fast to Peter Friesen, presently minister in Odessa. "Dear Brother. Upon my suggestion and with the support of my co-workers in the ministry of the Word and the administration of the church, the church on Sunday, April 16 of this year, decided the following: In view of our conditions with which you, dear brother, are almost as familiar as we are, and recalling your valuable ministry among us during the nearly two years you spent here, we extend an invitation to you to come to serve us in teaching and church leadership as a preacher and associate-leader with the gifts that God has given you. We believe that you have a special assignment for our church, which is in reality your mother church, and which, as we know, you love especially. Since, to our great joy, the community of Wohldemfuerst is issuing a unanimous call that you become a teacher in the three-room school now to be provided (where the responsibility for religious instruction to be assumed by our church or by its spiritual leaders would be primarily delegated to you), we believe it is the Lord who is calling you! We are quite aware also of your standing and your achievements in Mennonite educational circles. We are praying with you that your decision may be made according to the pleasure of God's will! In affectionate brotherly love, one with you in the Lord, Your brother, Daniel Fast, Elder of the M.B. Church, Wohldemfuerst, April 18, 1889." (Seal) Friesen, though highly enthusiastic about this call, could nevertheless not accept it for deeply personal reasons. (See above regarding his attitude to the deceased Br. Christian Schmidt.) His "schooling" and his work in Odessa had only just begun, and they were to continue for another seven years or so. The position in question was assumed by Br. Gerhard Giesbrecht. In this appointment, a youthful worker was drawn away from the business world, in which the young man did not feel at home, and was won for the intellectual domain. The school in Wohldemfuerst did not directly become an institution for the training of teachers and preachers but it did have, and still has, great value in God's kingdom. May He sanctify and perfect it more and more!

341 A strange phenomenon of the M.B. Church must be mentioned here. Men in spiritual offices, of approximately the same age as the author, when they were twenty or twenty-five years old, or even younger, would freely address every old man in the church, even the oldest elder as "brother" using the familiar "Du" expression (according to the "apostolic practice" of that time). Now with the serenity of the "servus servorum Dei," they have men twenty years their junior address them with "Sie" (polite form of address), while they themselves feel quite comfortable using the "Du" with these younger men who are in no way inferior to them intellectually or spiritually and who are, in fact, ordained co-workers. The designation "young," whether in reference to difference of opinion or direct reproof or exhortation, is used for nearly everyone who is five or ten years younger. Certainly this is not a demonstration of "Manhood in Christ."

342 With his widowed mother he was among the first settlers or founders of Friedensfeld.

343 The eldest sister of the author, by her first marriage the widow of Abram Dyck, who was murdered by bandits in the Kuban in the year of the founding of the Colony.

344 Probably the same Baron von Mirbach who, as a young aide-de-camp, had rendered great service to Johann Claassen (XXV).

345 In the summer of 1910 Br. Jakob Kroeker moved to Germany for an indefinite period of time.

346 Unfortunately, this school was unable to continue. The secondary school in Spat is now to be opened to both sexes (summer 1910).

347 As we are reading the corrected copy of this part, there is before us a telegraph message regarding his death following a severe illness lasting nine months. We hope to be able to report in greater detail about the life and work of this dear man. He died in his sixty-first year.

348 This settlement has to be distinguished from the Molotschna settlement in the province, Orenburg (see above "Karagui," Rueckenau division).

349 And form of baptism.

350 The Wuerttemberg Pietists had immigrated into the Caucasus and New Russia (Neu-Hoffnung, etc.) in the 1820s, motivated by the same views: western Europe was the future kingdom of the antichrist and Russia the great sheltering, protecting eagle.

E.
MILITARY SERVICE AND THE ATTITUDE OF THE RUSSIAN MENNONITES TOWARD THE STATE AND THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA. EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

1 P. V. Kamensky, **Question Concerning Understanding** (concerning the question of foreigners moved into Russia) Moscow, A. A. Levenson, 1895.

2 A. A. Velizen, **Germans in Russia**, 1893.

3 The Russian word "podvig" actually means "great dead"; the word is always used only for a religious, patriotic or military deed, etc., [rendered] with self-sacrifice, spirit and great courage.

4 Compare with the document cited under #69(2).

5 Kamensky, **op. cit.**, p. 22.

6 Kamensky, **op. cit.**

7 Kamensky, **op. cit.**

8 See above, #55.

9 We refer to minister D. H. Epp's book, **Die Chortitzer Mennoniten**, to personal notes which coincide with that book substantially (often to the letter), and to personal recollections.

10 Exactly how much "embracing" was being done five to ten years earlier between those of the Mennonite Church and the "Seceders"; between the "Ohrloffers" and the "five elders"; and—precisely at that time—the "landless" and the "landowners?!" In the winter of 1872-73 another (Molotschna) deputation (consisting of elder Bernhard Peters, Margenau, and minister Goertz, Rudnerweide, together with minister Franz Isaac—the one mentioned earlier—from the Ohrloff Congregation) was returning from St. Petersburg and honored the author (who was studying in Moscow at the time) with a visit. The first two were from the "five congregations" which were opposed to the Ohrloff Congregation and belonged to the landowners' party; Franz Isaac was precisely Franz Isaac who was the legal consultant for the Ohrloffers, the "brethren" and the "landless," in whose interest he had no doubt gone to Petersburg this time. The picture of a harmonious unity (!) between the two parties was not a wholesome one. It was the picture of a painful diplomacy between the representatives of two antagonistic armies during a temporary cease fire where neither side considers an unconditional peace treaty until such a time as the dead on both sides have been buried. It was a difficult time, then! Concerning Elder Suderman, a dear "brother" from the "Wuest" era, it can be stated, by the way, that, thanks to his piety, his temperament, and his isolated residence he was conceivably able to remain non-partisan in relation to all of these contentious issues. In St. Petersburg, however, he spoke in behalf of all the Mennonites, but their sins which were in contrast to their confession of faith were well known at the capital. The controversy between the honorable bishops and the illustrious statesman gave the impression of a battle fought with wooden swords! The Mennonite elders forgot that special, gigantic shelves in St. Petersburg were filled with "records of Mennonite quarrels." What is more, the Mennonites would not have been able to live together in an orderly and peaceful manner even to a limited extent had it not been for the powerful, largely non-partisan and benevolent hand of the state. One needs only to recall the settlement story of Chortitza:

the "deputied ones" in minister D. H. Epp's book (to say nothing of more intimate documented material), the "Kleinegemeinde," Elder Heinrich Wiens, the "brethren persecution," the "non-resistant Mennonite cudgels," the "barley controversy," the "Halbstadt sanctuary controversy!" The author of this book (just as minister Epp in his book) has sooner homeopathically understressed the facts than exaggerated them. A feeling of disgust and shame no doubt prevented both authors from being entirely realistic. The count, for his part, was a son of the old Livonic order of knights called "the Cross and the Sword," according to whose understanding a man's life began when he became a page (weapon carrier) and became fulfilled when he entered knighthood. Such a person could see only "the iron clad fist" as being useful for the state which appeared to exist (according to the ancient Teutonic knightly ideals) for the sole purpose (in Count Heyden's own words) of waging war! This ideal was forcefully declared by the enthroned grandmaster of the Teutonic order with his message about "the gospel from the German Kaiser" and the "armored fist!" The young commander of the guard showed himself clearly to be the most intelligent in the controversy cited above. He saw clearly that "if all people were Mennonites" (he naturally did not mean nominal Mennonites but those who really were Mennonites in their life style), "then there would be no need for war!" No doubt he had been affected to some extent by the great shifting ideological work and warfare of the sixties of which the humane military law of 1874 must be considered an outgrowth. This law signified a just and mitigating reform of the old, dreadful military service system. From the standpoint of governmental legislation this was a large evangelical step forward in the direction of the note sounded by the Russian Tsar in his invitation to the Hague Peace Conference. Concerning the "records of Mennonite quarrels" it is fitting at this point that a small but significant incident from the more recent history of the South Russian Mennonites be preserved from oblivion. In the seventies, during the ministry of Valujev, the late, very worthy and long time president of the Molotschna Mennonite school board, Mr. Andreas Voth (Neu-Halbstadt), travelled to St. Petersburg concerning educational affairs. Mr. Voth, by his own admission, had up to that point allowed himself to be used repeatedly by the "high and mighty" (the heads and leaders of the "five congregations") and the "landowners" for their party purposes. This particular time, also, as a delegate for business concerning the total Mennonite community, and with expenses covered by the same, he had allowed himself to be persuaded underhandedly to present petitions which particularly furthered the special interests of those who were at that time the "high and mighty." (Today those things have of course almost entirely faded away and have been forgotten.) The minister, at this point, became highly incensed. He showed these shelves with their mass of records to Voth and asked him if he thought that no one in St. Petersburg knew of the unchristian partisanship, enmity and injustice among the Mennonites?—if enough of their shame had not already been brought into the capital city?—if this is the way those practice Christianity who claim to live precisely by the gospel? Then the minister went into his chamber, brought out a German Bible (!) (apparently kept in readiness for such a situation since the matter had been introduced earlier) and proceeded to read before the stunned Mr. Voth from the first part of the sixth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. And he expounded it with a clarity and a holy solemnity which made Mr. Voth feel as though he were hearing the very first sermon of his life! The sermon had results. Voth related it repeatedly to the author who was his young friend and protege (secondary school teacher at the time). Voth reported the entire incident at a school business meeting in his own room where this writer was also present. He addressed the assembled ones (ecclesiastical and civic leaders, mostly from the landowner party, and ecclesiastical conservatives, i.e., reactionaries) in a very clear and penetrating manner: "on behalf of the Minister to the Mennonites with greetings from him," so that every one sat there as if paralyzed. Then Voth explained that he would never again participate in the manner referred to earlier (which he unfortunately had done). He kept his word and received his reward: even at the time of his explanation, an icy, threatening expression settled on many of the faces. These were the same people who dozens of times had said to him (when because of business responsibilities he wished to withdraw from schoolboard work): "Keep on working, travel on behalf of the schools, only you can do this; you will

not be forgotten, you shall have the recognition and gratitude of the churches," etc. (This writer personally heard such talk quite often.) When this worthy man's damaged subsistence had finally caught up with him (by his continuous travels, the meetings and the receptions), they left him in the lurch. He was ruined in a legal manner. This was done by working out an agreement with the community which would grant him the benefit of a quantity of communal rental land as compensation. (This land, by the way, it was customary then to lease out very magnanimously.) The voice of those who were in favor (they were very few) could not pass it; those who could have, did not wish to do so (largely, we believe, because of that "sermon from the Minister on I Cor. 6," and the conclusion drawn by Voth). Several of the influential people who would have liked to see him get the compensation (who saw the fulfillment of his desire as a just reward) did not want to enter into a conflict with those who were then in power. One parcel of rental land, which was unofficially designated for him as an "honorarium" by the aforementioned, was never recognized as legally his. Andrei Petrovitsch Voth died a ruined man; his widow and orphans are providing for themselves with honest and respectable work. A number of Voth's friends, however, who are acquainted with his history, experience heartache even today every time they meet his family! There are not enough of these, probably, to change things. With respect to those circumstances, they have now largely (praise God!) faded away and been forgotten. They have been blotted out through new intellectual, spiritual and unspiritual movements in societal and civic spheres and—well, in a word—through the grace of God. Many of those who today adhere to the ideologies or belong to the organizations mentioned above are strangers to those events. For that reason, also, we have not mentioned any names. We have only related the facts which are to be a lesson for those of us who are alive and a tribute of gratitude to the deceased and his family. (Written in 1903.)

11 The pastors of the Moravian Brethren Church have always shown love towards the Mennonites and have given good counsel. This was true also of Pastor Nielsen in regard to Johann Claassen of Liebenau (1860-62) in the interest of "Mennonite Brethren," even though he did not agree with their ecclesiological principles. Nor could Pastor Hans, naturally, share the non-resistant position of the Mennonites from the standpoint of his denomination.

12 No, by the Monarch not only by the government.

13 See #55.

14 The author had the joy, as a very young secondary school teacher, of meeting with and speaking to him in his classroom and in his dwelling.

15 Influentially active in behalf of remaining in Russia were the following men who were personally close to the author: School board president Andreas Voth, Area Administrative Officer Abram Wiebe, Minister Bernhard Harder and Abram Goerz, at that time still active in civic offices (mayor in Altonau, district judge), minister in the Ohrloff-Halbstadt congregation and soon to become an elder.

16 See his expositions below in Part II, #46.

17 Well known as an extremely strong representative of the landless. His vehement and inconsiderate work in opposition to Totleben (in which he used the Tsar's name incorrectly) was brought to Totleben's attention by Thiessen's local political opponents. Totleben was responsible for Thiessen's administrative deportation into the province of Kaluga from where the latter eventually fled and went to America. In 1887 he returned as an American citizen, started his defense of the landless again and, after another denunciation, had to leave Russia.

18 Founder of the extremely one-sided and exclusive "Wiebe's Church" in Manitoba, Canada. Not to be confused with the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church which was also referred to as Wiebe's Church."

19 Subsequent note: long before Schellenberg, in 1875, Elder Eckert of the M.B. Church in Hansau on the Volga had emigrated with his small congregation.

20 The author's personal viewpoint concerning the position of Mennonites in relation to the state, military service, etc., is expressed in the "General Historical-Statistical Overview of Mennonitism" at the conclusion of this book.

21 Matrimony with non-Mennonite women who do not belong to the Greek Orthodox Church does not necessitate that a man or his children relinquish their Mennonite religious rights. Such is, however, the case when Mennonite women enter matrimony with non-Mennonites. Their children may certainly (if they so choose) become members of the Mennonite Church but they may not claim special military privileges. For daughters of such marriages this is, of course, different. These can, thus, become "full fledged Mennonites." In the case of a mixed marriage between Mennonites and persons of the [Greek] Orthodox faith the Mennonite man or woman has the full right, according to state law, of keeping his Mennonite Confession of Faith. The children, however, do not [have the right] under any circumstances, in Russia. (Written in 1903.) Continued, 1907: That is how it was up to the manifesto of April 17, 1905 and subsequent amplifications regarding religious freedom. Since then, each adult (21 years) of the Orthodox faith may embrace a Christian Confession of faith as he wills, including his children up to the age of fourteen (if both parents are agreed). Thus, the matrimonial relationships (and their consequences) for Mennonites marrying Greek Orthodox individuals is exactly the same (see above) as with mixed marriages with non-Mennonites from the non-Orthodox [denominations]: Baptists, Lutherans, etc. Based on a circular from the Minister of the Interior dated Aug. 15, 1905 (No. 4628) an Orthodox woman was granted permission to cross over to the Mennonite faith. This was achieved by a letter from Governor of the province of Taurida, dated Nov. 26, 1907 (No. 11015).

22 Published under #460 of the "Collection of Laws and Ordinances of the Government," 1875.

23 In the memorandum, anticipated here, which was presented to General Totleben in St. Petersburg on November 15, 1875 by a delegation, the Mennonites expressed the view that the forestry service in South Russia would be the most suitable form of service, but that it would also be desirable to allow the young people, according to desire and ability, to perform their service in the work-places of the crown. However, on November 19, 1879, the representatives of the Molotschna congregations, meeting in the Halbstadt church, concluded that only one form of service, that in the forestry work, was suitable and desirable. In addition to those mentioned, another two delegations went to the governors of Taurida, Ekaterinoslav, Kherson and Samara. Several other written documents, including a forestry proposal, were presented to Totleben upon his recommendation. Especially noteworthy is the fact that repeatedly, as in this writing, petitions were made concerning the security, that is, the self-administration of the schools and their holding equal rights with the state schools.

24 Is to be understood as meaning "had accepted the sovereignty of."

25 Exemption from service and permission to emigrate without loss of possessions until January 1, 1880.

26 Provinces of Kherson, Taurida and Ekaterinoslav.

27 On this date the treaty was signed by the deputies of the Halbstadt volost. Then, later, by the volost administrations in the Taurida and Ekaterinoslav provinces. The remaining Mennonites consented to the agreement. On Sept. 19, at the Halbstadt area administrative offices, several subsequent final transactions took place between the government Commissioner (this time, as well as last, Privy Councillor Bark, a high officer in forestry affairs) and the Church elders and area administrative officers of the districts of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld (Taurida province), Chortitza and Nikolaifeld (district and province of Ekaterinoslav) and Schoenfeld (district of Alexandrov, province of Ekaterinoslav). Here the treaty was finally completed and it became obligatory for all Russian Mennonites. Privy Councillor Bark had full authoritative power to act in the name of the central government.

28 Now, in 1910, there are eight, besides the Phylloxera detachment.

29 Every Russian subject is presently guaranteed this freedom by law. Even before the promulgation of this law no Mennonite was ever denied the right to emigrate, unless it was for reasons of civil or criminal law. Still in 1880, after the period of grace with regard to emigration had expired, the provincial authorities received the permission to allow all (free colonists) to emigrate unmolested.

30 This was granted, then discontinued.

31 Cf. "Schools" below. The shortened period of voluntary service was not granted since this could only be served "on the front."

32 To be distinguished from the founder of the Krimmer M.B. Church whose name is also Jacob Wiebe. (See above #36(2).)

33 Appointed for discovering and exterminating the Phylloxera or Vine Louse in the Vineyeards, especially in the Crimea.

34 Former "Presidents" have been: Peter Gerhard Dyck, Rosental, Dietrich Johann Loewen, Chortitza, David Unruh, Gnadenfeld (these three formed a committee); then, as "authorized representatives" or presidents there followed: Andreas Wallmann, Chortitza, Peter Rempel, Einlage, Jacob Dyck, Steinbach, Isaac Dyck, Rosental (now an elder), Franz Peters, Petersdorf, Jacob Suderman, Apanlee, David Dick, Apanlee and (presently) David Claassen, Felsental.

35 Now called "Chief Ministry of Agriculture."

36 Or: "General Mennonite Conference," see #297.

37 It is such because of the participation of all the congregations (it may be that one percent is in opposition) and through legal approval of its meetings (since it is truly the "General Conference") by the federal authorities.

38 Designation for the Manager-Minister at the Forestry Camps.

39 Understood as Russian Subjects.

40 Volost or village assembly.

41 The Russian word "obschina" "spiritual assembly" or "fellowship;" the Russian word "obschestvo" is civic assembly.

F.
ISSUES CONCERNING MATTERS OF FAITH IN THE MENNONITE BROTHERHOOD OF RUSSIA AT THE PRESENT TIME (1905 - 1910)

1 "Middle class."

2 In the province of Ekaterinoslav a Mennonite, Mr. H. A. Bergmann, was elected as a member of the third Imperial Duma.

3 The few Mennonites who accepted this platform soon realized that there was a vast difference between the printed program and the strategy of the "K-D" [constitutional Democrats], especially between the sympathies and antipathies of most people in this party. The warm handshaking begun by the "K-D" was changed to an icy rejection, especially when the Mennonites found that the "K-D" were not explicit enough in their stance on the monarchy, and too vague with regard to imperial and linguistic unity. The "K-D" responded with a biting satire. Cf. "Union for Freedom, Truth and Love of Peace," printed in the "Crimean Messenger" No. 263 and later in 1905, and article by "Dykii," in the same paper, January and February, 1906.

4 We only know of two; cf. brochure: "A Mennonite Criminal. Three letters from P. M. Friesen." Halbstadt, Raduga.

5 For more information, see "schools," below.

6 With the exception of the minutes of the General Conference, because not all participants can adequately understand the Russian.

7 I.e., people of other Christian denominations.

8 Minister Jakob Kroeker and H. J. Braun, Halbstadt, were also present at the consultation. These signatures are missing on the printed copy. An oversight? They have not spoken against the formulation of the document.

9 On March 8, 1910, submitted by the Mennonite deputies in matters of faith (Abraham Goerz, Heinrich Braun—who had been elected on January 28, 1910 at Schoensee by the "General Mennonite Church Council" as the third deputy—and David Epp—elected to represent the ailing elder Isaak Dyck by the same Council, and then after Dyck's final withdrawal, appointed by the Conference in Schoensee, October 26-28, 1910, as deputy with Goerz and Braun) to the Department for Ecclesiastical Affairs in the Ministry of the Interior. "Position of the Mennonites," etc., had already been presented in 1908 by the member of the Duma, Mr. Bergmann. (Thus far the footnote in the printed pamphlet: "Documents . . . Mennonites" issued by the Molotschna Mennonite Church Council, 1910.) These "Explanations" had been prepared in the Russian language by Elder Abraham Goerz and minister P. M. Friesen (who had been unanimously entrusted by the Church Council with this matter alongside of Goerz) and were then submitted by Goerz to Mr. H. A. Bergmann. The author takes the responsibility for the translation given here. These "Explanations" were unanimously accepted by the General Council at Schoenwiese on January 28, 1908, as well as on June 18 and 19 of the same year, with the Document of February 7, 1908. Thus both documents have been accepted by all Mennonites of Russia through their representatives, and as such, as already stated, submitted to the central authorities of the Empire.

10 Through the local police.

11 "Almost" all!

12 Should read: "We Mennonites of Russia." Not all Mennonites, and especially not nearly all Mennonites of America would subscribe to this our creed.

13 "Mennonites of Russia!"

14 I.e. the various communions.

15 "Of Russia."

16 "The Mennonites of Russia."

17 This Conference, more properly the "General Conference" (see further, Minutes) is attended by both—the Mennonite congregations as well as Mennonite Brethren congregations. At the close, a separate meeting is held by the Mennonite congregations.

18 It has already convened. These "Wishes" were prepared in the Russian language (as a result of an assignment made by a deliberative assembly in Schoensee, June 18, 19, 1910) by a Commission on August 1-3 in Ekaterinoslav. This Commission was composed of the elders Abraham Goerz and Heinrich Unruh and the ministers Heinrich Braun, David Epp, Peter Penner, and P. M. Friesen. The translation of this document is also our responsibility. At the Conference in October, 1910, it was accepted with minor changes, as is seen in the Minutes.

19 See footnote 18.

20 The words: "church-congregations," "church-elders" are not used here to differentiate them from the M.B. Churches, but are to be understood in contra-distinction to "civic" congregations and elders.

21 Generally known.

22 The statues given in #294, etc.

23 Often called "Sunday schools," which is not appropriate under our circumstances. Our children receive "systematic" instruction in religion in public schools. This is completely different in America.

24 Keeping of the "civil register."

25 Thus in the Molotschna, in summer, 1910. The matter has not been settled until this day (November, 1910).

26 The business was finished in two days rather than three, as foreseen earlier—typically Mennonite! This Conference had to be presented to the Minister of the Interior for approval, with an enclosure of the specific program, the list of deputies, as well as the authorized resolutions of participating congregations. This is now the third Mennonite conference which has been held with special permission of the Ministry of the Interior and in the presence of representatives of the government: last year's "General" in Schoenfeld, District of Alexandrovsk, in October; that of the M.B. Church in May of this year in Tiege, Zagradovka, and this last one.

27 Unfortunately, we cannot establish the exact time, since we are not any more in the possession of the collection of minutes. This fact can be easily ascertained by consulting the permanent conference-secretary, minister Gerhard Harder, and other permanent conference members, the elders and ministers.

28 Thus also the newest congregations of Lichtfelde, Molotschna, and Altonau, Zagradovka. (See above, as well as below.)

29 Since this is related to a new action of the authorities, which has not yet reached the stage of realization, we do not consider it to be proper to divulge names and dates.

30 Instruction of the provincial administration of Taurida, August 27, 1910, No. 9844.

31 Of the Mennonite Church.

32 Ontario.

33 We refer here to #260 ff: "Is the nonresistant Mennonite unpatriotic?" Naturally we are not writing officially nor officiously, but are expressing private and personal views. We are convinced, however, that we think as do ninety percent of the Mennonites in Russia.

34 Thus the collective "Wishes," etc. (#295) have been somewhat inaccurately described here.

35 In this book—#295.

36 With the completion of this point, the delegates from the M.B. Church withdrew, as well as those from the Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood; and the majority-congregations had their intra-church deliberations, just as the M.B. Church also has its closed conferences.

37 A graduate of the missions seminary of Barmen and of the secondary school in Sagradovka.

G.
FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE MENNONITES OF RUSSIA

1 A society founded by William Carey.

2 Up to that time, for about twenty-five years, they had sent their gifts directly to the Baptist Mission.

3 Cf. also "Gnadenfeld," "Brotherhood" and "Foreign Missions' Interest," above.

4 Now living in retirement in Simferopol.

5 "Medical Mission."

6 One guilder, approximately 79 kopeks.

7 Russian Mennonites, we believe.

8 Sumatra, like Java, belongs to the kingdom of the Netherlands or Holland. Sumatra is about 13 times, Java about 4 times, as large as Holland itself. Sumatra has

approximately four million inhabitants; Java, approximately thirty million, of which seventy thousand are Europeans. Holland itself has scarcely six million inhabitants; it has approximately one twenty-fifth as many inhabitants as Russia, and its geographical area is about 1/650 that of Russia. It has, however, about forty million subjects in the colonies (Dutch East Indies), the most significant after the English colonies, and the wealthiest of all colonies of European states [Friesen].

9 Reporter: first South-Russian Mennonite missionary.

10 When Br. Dirks returned to Russia.

11 Son of the reporter.

12 Now itinerant missions-preacher of the West-Prussian Mennonite churches, residing in Marienburg.

13 "Started" insofar as it refers to the work of our South-Russian Mennonite missionaries.

14 Son of the well-known factory owner, deceased in Rueckenau, and who was a minister of the M.B. Church (earlier in Einlage) Johann Friesen. See above, "History of the Einlage M.B. Church."

15 We omit the punctuation which indicates omissions and assume responsibility for the damage in style caused by this abbreviation. Our insertions, however, are indicated thus: [. . .].

16 The dear couple is childless.

17 Baptist Seminary in Hamburg-Horn.

18 Later, the M.B. Church of North America organized its own missionary society; they did not want to have any relationship to the Baptists in whose territory Nalgonda Mission was located. Their strong efforts to form one missionary society with the M.B. Church of Russia miscarried.

H.
INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MENNONITES IN RUSSIA

1 Cf. "Gnadenfeld congregation," ##43 ff., above. Tobias Voth was thus also an "Old-Flemish" or a "Groninger."

2 From here on some of the pages have been damaged so that we have to guess at some words. We substitute [words] according to personal conviction and without brackets [. . .] because they are not words of significant substance.

3 Compare #59, e above.

4 See #52, J, Claassen's Projects.

5 See #59, e.

6 Cf. Simon and the sinful woman.

7 Poetic form for "England."

8 I.e., the son of the "evil one," Napoleon III.

9 The German colonist of that day did not, so to speak, see Russia in its totality. The benevolent emperor, the willing laborer, the good land—that was the Russia he saw. (See "emigration," Jansen, Sudermann, Peters, etc., above.) The rest was strange and far-removed for him; the South-Russian peasant of that day lived, in the eyes of the colonist, and with respect to the Russian peasant's needs, quite well. From his generous

portion of land of that day, he rented to the colonists almost as much as they might want. It was only later that an antagonism against Russia appeared in the religious German press (Pan-Slavism, etc.) which influenced a few of our people, as has been stated in connection with "emigration."

10 According to some sources he was in Ohrloff for 15 years; however, we are convinced that it could only have been 13 years; 1829-1842.

11 And not of the village community as such.

12 Cf. #11, c, above.

13 Franz was thus twenty-five years younger than Heese. Since, in two years, we will have the hundredth anniversary of his birth, the Mennonites of Russia may rightfully expect, from his numerous living students, who are old men by now, a detailed biography of this old master of our educational system. This must be done so that we will not again prove to be "unhistorical." The author can give only a very brief biography of him.

14 According to A. A. Neufeld.

15 With reference to Cornies we have an inspiring biography from D. H. Epp, *Johann Cornies*.

16 One year before Voth, according to the statement of some very old men, the Ohrloff Society-School is supposed to have had a teacher named Villa, of whom nothing more specific is known.

17 For foreigners we might mention that the second name is always the father's name, according to Russian practice. For Mennonites or Germans respectively, we give it in abbreviated form: for national Russians, e.g., "Ossipovitsch," etc., in full, whereby we simultaneously identify nationality.

18 The secondary school at Halbstadt under Rempel had a rich and well-selected library which Unruh utilized to the fullest extent, using books as if they were his textbooks. In 1873 this library was sold by the Area Administrative Office at an auction sale, in order to divide school property more equitably between Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld. P. M. Friesen, a completely new teacher, was celebrating his "eve-of-the-wedding" party that evening. "Uncle Neufeld" was not bold enough. Thus, almost the entire library was lost by Halbstadt for very little money.

19 The seminary at Muristalden was free, specifically orthodox—more accurately—pietistic-conservative. It stood in opposition to the state seminary, which was radically "reformed," i.e., modernistic in its religious tendencies.

20 Who thought that he could, with the acquisition of scientific and pedagogical knowledge in French Switzerland, obtain a knowledge of the French language "for nothing." In Bern he had not only studied a great deal of French, but also Latin and Greek, just as he had earlier during his public school teaching period (making use of books and Jewish rabbis) studied Hebrew so thoroughly that he could read the Old Testament in the original text.

21 Twelve Russian "pud." One "pud"—forty Russian pounds. One Russian pound—a little more than two-fifths of a kilogram.

22 The same consists of an examination in the "general" educational subjects: Russian language, arithmetic, history, and geography (for religion, the non-Orthodox present certificates from their own clergy) in scope somewhat like the advanced secondary school course. The whole examination is conducted in the Russian language, as with native Russians. For the major subject (in this case German), the examination is conducted in the scope of a full eight-year advanced secondary school course. One receives the right to teach only the major subjects. The privileges granted by the certificate are substantial: teaching privileges in German for the four-year course in boys' advanced secondary schools, and for all classes in girls' advanced secondary schools. It also confers the right of private instruction, and the founding and directing of four-year private schools.

23 In our close observation we have been involuntarily reminded of the dethroned King Lear, the tragic hero of Shakespeare. Only in the case of Unruh the tragedy was inward; outwardly he acted realistically and modestly in untiring professional activity.

24 The author had the joy, two months before Unruh's death, during a three-day stay, to have long and intimate discussions with him. They had fellowship, and as a trio they also observed the Lord's Supper at his sick and "workingbed"; unforgettable hours! Here, in this book, we have to be very brief.

25 Scientifically, this examination is equal to that of the private-tutor examination. Pedagogical maturity, in the scope of the eight-year advanced secondary school course, is required in each major subject.

26 "Curators" in Russian terminology.

27 In his early years, teacher at Steinbach; famous for his teaching of the Russian language.

28 Cf. at the end of "Educational System"—"statistical summary."

29 So-called because it was the property of the "Molotschna Mennonite district," and located in its "center."

30 The father of the mother of Count S. J. Witte.

31 Grandfather of the Ohrloff Secondary School teacher J. J. Braeul. In his time he was an outstanding, progressive teacher, even before the school reform of Cornies. He created a special sensation through his teaching in the Russian language, and in general through his ability to awaken in his pupils an interest in learning.

32 The principal had to submit copies of all school documents to the Ministry of Public Education.

33 For a long time almost every (?) church pupil had to serve as assistant secretary in the Area Administrative Office. Only then was the decision made whether he should become a teacher or remain a secretary. The more gifted were sent to the Supervisory Commission in Odessa for further education, especially in Russian. The life of these did not always turn out well. Some who returned, however, were very competent.

34 Higher inspectors of the ministry of public education have repeatedly drawn attention to this, unlike those of the lower school officials.

35 If it is not observed in a slavish, one-sided and ridiculous manner.

36 After special preparation he became a sailor, and after leaving Halbstadt, was the captain of a ship on the Volga.

37 Even though he was several months older than these his teachers.

38 Also engaged in preaching.

39 In Russia there are two categories of seminaries for teachers: those that are called seminaries for teachers of public schools, and the institutes for teachers of the higher six-classroom city schools. The "institutes" are a continuation of the seminaries, and have a considerably more comprehensive program.

40 The main teacher was paid 1000 rubles at this time. Added to this was the teacherage including heating (or 200 rubles instead). "The Russian" received 650 rubles with other amenities added. Friesen had voluntarily chosen the Russian language, that being his inclination and since it was assumed that he would become the main teacher. L. Neufeld had considered a different position. The salary ratio in the meantime tended toward greater equality beginning in the second year, so that in the last years Friesen, as principal, and as teacher of the Russian language received 1200 rubles and free teacherage; that is, the highest salary.

41 Lenzmann, in Gnadenfeld, worked in his major subject (religion) almost up to the academic standard!

42 Since one could substitute teacher training for military service, there appeared not only a few aspirants wishing to try the teaching profession not only from the group of selected scholarship students but also from the group of well-to-do scholars of the free schools.

43 The Halbstadt Secondary School is located in the village Neu-Halbstadt which forms a unit with ("Alt") Halbstadt geographically.

44 Now generally called "Pedagogues."

45 The original Russian document is filed in the offices of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board.

46 Andreas Voth, Abram Goerz, Heinrich Franz, Hermann Lenzmann.

47 The Chortitza representative in Halbstadt for this cause was secondary school teacher and minister, and later Elder Heinrich Epp.

48 Addition of author; as in all other instances, the brackets indicate his explanations, as is explained on page 1, footnote.

49 The official title, including seal, was the "Molotschna Mennonite School Board."

50 Original in Russian in the Archives of the Molotschna Mennonite School Board.

51 Compare the above with our detailed arguments in #11, c.

52 See above, program verified for Molotschna and Chortitza, etc.

53 As individuals these colleagues of different confessions of faith may be able to work together in some isolated instances, but not as representatives of their congregations, and hardly in questions of religion!!

54 "Of the Chortitza, Halbstadt, and Gnadenfeld area."

55 It is symptomatic that the Halbstadt Secondary School observes no anniversaries. By 1885 the school had been functioning for fifty years, and by 1910, seventy-five years. In Ohrloff and Chortitza things were quite different (see below). To consider the reasons at this time is inappropriate for personal and other considerations.

56 In essence, we are following A. A. Neufeld's *Chortitzer Central Schule* here as well.

57 One calls this a lottery without any gain.

58 Printing error—Works?

59 Teaching certificate for a city elementary school.

60 We quote A. A. Neufeld directly here.

61 We fostered these expectations and hopeful desires because of some very detailed and mutually frank conversations we had with him as colleagues in the advanced secondary school, as students, and as teachers.

62 This did not mean that he was spared frustrations.

63 See brochure: "The Chortitza Secondary School 1842 to 1892. For the Fifteeth Anniversary of the school. A lecture by A. Neufeld, Berdiansk. Printed by H. Ediger, 1893." The above quotations of Neufeld's about Heese, Franz, and others regarding the Chortitza school were taken from this brochure.

64 In Germany the title is more elegantly stated as "Higher School for Daughters"; but in our circles "Girls' School" is ingrained; in Russian, "female school."

65 In most of the Russian girls' advanced secondary schools having seven classes (which in themselves have authority to grant elementary school teaching certificates to females and also to grant entrance to the university courses) there exists an eighth or a pedagogical course. Graduates from this class are authorized to be private tutors with first and second class certificates; those who graduate with the medal (honors) from the seventh class can become private tutors with a first class certificate after completing an eighth year.

66 "Middle School" in Russia means the eight-class advanced secondary school, seven-class vocational secondary schools and similar institutions; "Higher Schools" means universities and other similar institutions: polytechnic academies, seminaries, and other academies.

68 Hausknecht, too, belongs on our list of our first intermediate school teachers. He was the father of teacher Hausknecht of Gnadenfeld mentioned in Section 52, and the grandfather of the well-known physician Dr. Hausknecht.

69 "I" refers always to our kind reporter.

70 The first chairman of the Molotschna Teachers' Society was the secondary school teacher Kornelius A. Wiens, Halbstadt; the incumbent is secondary school teacher Johann H. Janzen, Ohrloff. Chairman of the Chortitza Teachers' Society is H. H. Epp, principal of the Chortitza Secondary School.

71 In Holland, too, although the total number of Doopsgezinde undoubtedly is growing, the number of adherents is decreasing yearly in proportion to the rest of the population (according to Dutch Mennonite sources; compare above #9 and 10).

72 Now being administered by the commission of the council of church leaders.

73 Even today the three oldest schools of the Cornies' type of 1844 remain in use, though, of course, they are expanded and renovated—these are in Ohrloff, Rueckenau, and Gnadenheim.

74 According to which each district, Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld, elected three members, and the Council of Church Leaders appointed its special representative.

75 The Ohrloff teachers K. Unruh and J. Braeul always bore the lion's share when commissions were given for papers or for editorial work. Braeul was especially involved with the Russian documents. This has remained something like a tradition in the Molotschna.

76 It was believed that this reader would supplant the Bible. Until this time, the Bible had been misused as a reader, for it was used mechanically (!). From our own experience we know the damage that was done by this misuse.

77 For many years he was honorary justice of the peace and member of the Tauridan Government Semstvo; his advice was often sought not only by the Tauridan but also the St. Petersburg authorities.

78 Consequently the Gnadenfeld district has undertaken to accept co-responsibility and co-administration with the Halbstadt district.

79 Post office for Schoenwiese: Alexandrovsk, District Ekaterinoslav.

80 Johann Philipp Isaak lives and works in the spirit of his departed father, Philipp Isaak, Tiege; see above, "History of the Mennonite Brethren Congregation, Rueckenau"; J. P. Wiebe maintains the traditions of his grandfather, Cornies, Sr., and of his father Philipp Wiebe.

81 Son of minister Johann Martens, Muntau (died at Sagradovka), and grandson of minister Jakob Martens, Tiegenhagen.

82 #269.

83 Field hospital of the Ekaterinoslav Semstvo, etc.

84 Of this 11,500 rubles from America.

85 The title of the Catechism is "Short Instruction in the Scriptures which we consider necessary for those who want to join the fellowship of the Christian Church called Mennonites. Composed in questions and answers." The title of the formulary is "Schedule of several Christian prayers which are used by believers in congregations or by each one individually according to occasion and need (before God) with reverence and on bent knees of the heart."

J.
GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION AND ECONOMIC-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MENNONITES OF RUSSIA FROM 1860 TO 1910

1 The Polish, Volhynian and Volga Mennonite colonies will be separately reported on below.

2 Next to the name of the postal institution one always places the abbreviated name of the territory "Ch. D."

3 From the beginning of the colonization up to the present it has been shown that in all groups, almost without exception, the Mennonite family consists of a little over five persons. This small size of the family can be explained by the fact that as soon as a young man and a young woman marry, their names are taken off the family register and are regarded as a new family. Also a widower and a widow are counted as family heads. Besides full and half farms there are also possibly in all Mennonite settlements one and one half, one half and double farms on lease land as well as on purchased land, even though not at the beginning of the settlement. Very seldom there are farmsteads outside of the old Chortitza and Molotschna parent colonies with less than 25 dessiatines of land. The small or quarter farms have to a large extent disappeared in the parent colonies because of sale and purchase. It appears that on less land than 25 dessiatines a Mennonite farmer cannot make a living without having additional income. More correctly, on the average a quarter farm can be thought of only as an assistance to an income from a trade; or else it supports a very small family when the family rents out its arable land on half shares. The small farm does not make possible a large number of cattle or farm implements in keeping with the farming system practiced up to now. Two "small farmers" must work together, and with very rare exceptions that seems to be impossible. This was explained to the author by persons with practical experience.

4 These lands, as well as those bought by the Molotschna Volosts of Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld, acquired for coming generations, were purchased with income from leased lands and from land provision funds. The leased land of the Chortitza Volost comprises 3,022 dessiatines, that of the two Molotschna volosts, 12,000 dessiatines.

5 The owners of full farms who are co-settlers in such settlements of the Mennonites must as a rule pay the home church for one-half of their land immediately; the other half they get under the same easy conditions as the half-farm owners do, i.e., gradual repayment without interest. The co-settling of such well-to-do full farm owners is to bring capital to the young colony.

6 Because a new, more rational keeping of the parish register and more careful statistics in forestry camp matters have been begun, statistical data will become more accurate in a few years.

7 We place a question mark with establishments which in our documents are reported in one sum with other businesses of the same owner, e.g., brewery and commercial firm with iron products. Here we report the business establishments separately and divide the total according to our estimation and give the sums in two different places, e.g., brewery, trading firm, printing firm and book store, etc.

8 Cf. #246, 2b, above.

9 Before reading this report, please re-read ##53, 56, and 65-69.

10 Highly interesting are the reports about the beginning of the Mennonite heavy industry, which minister D. H. Epp gives in the **Botschafter** (1910, etc.) "Master Peter Lepp" and others. We hope that these articles will appear in book form.

11 Many a person became wealthy, built up a flourishing large machine workshop, but became overly venturesome, wanted to become rich and great, expanded his business into a large factory—and went bankrupt. N.B.! The writer of this part of the report, which

was written about seven years ago, remarks today that the factories at present have an enormous market and their position is secure; some of the "newer" steam flour mills, however, operate without estimating the market areas and market conditions (see the first starch factory), and do not operate rationally and safely in matters of finance and commerce.

12 Cf. footnote: "Settlements." N.B.! We have come to know larger groups of very well situated Mennonite farmers on lease land of 25 dessiatines with regular village schools, farm buildings, clothing and food, small gardens and forests.

13 Mennonites living in the cities, like those in the volosts, are involved and desired in the administrative agencies of the cities, for example in Ekaterinoslav, Berdiansk, Melitopol, Alexandrovsk, etc. In agricultural institutions (Semtsvo) also they are playing their role (even if not in large enough numbers), especially in the provinces of Ekaterinoslav and Taurida. From the first they were very interested in the imperial Duma elections. With respect to their social position, the Mennonites, with decreasing exceptions, are farmers. In addition to the comparatively few craftsmen, industrialists and merchants, and the approximately 500 teachers (almost only in our own schools), as well as the fairly significant number of technicians and engineers, there is a very small number of physicians and lawyers, and hardly more than three or four government officials. In their civil position, almost all Mennonites are settlers, i.e., former colonists. Only a few have become members of the businessmen's estate. One or two dozen families are, because of their level of service or because of receipt of special citations, hereditary honorary citizens. The heads of families may be members of the nobility, and their children also hereditary honorary citizens. As far as we know, the highest rank to which a Mennonite has been elevated is that of state councillor. (Hereditary nobility can be gained only with the rank of a true state councillor, or by means of the conferral of membership in a high order.) Here we also wish to mention that the Mennonites in Russia, in proportion to their number, sit in "assizes" or juries (sworn courts). The idea of "sworn courts" seems terrible to our brothers in America. We can assure them that neither here nor in any assumption of office does a Mennonite in Russia have to swear; he simply signs an affirmation (cf. =68, c).

K.
SUMMARY PRESENTATION OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL AND SPIRITUAL COURSE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLDER MENNONITE CHURCHES IN RUSSIA FROM 1860 TO 1910

1 From here on we indicate the civic vocation of the person in question: "f." means "farmer" up to "full farmer"; larger land owners are indicated by "l.e.o."—"landed estate owners."

2 "T." means "public school teacher"; "sst," "secondary school teacher"; in the case of those who are "self-taught" with public school education we make no comment.

3 "Sse" means "has secondary school education."

4 We place the symbol "-?-" in cases where we think that gaps occur in the sequence of names of the spiritual leaders.

5 As is known, the Ohrloff elder, Bernhard Fast, let himself be confirmed by the Rudnerweide Frisian elder, Franz Goerz, and thus the Ohrloff congregation was regarded as being united with the Frisian congregation, which was a reason for the separation of the Lichtenau congregation from Ohrloff.

6 For a time Schoensee was considered a branch of Lichtenau.

7 In 1890 a church building was erected in Alexanderkrone, and thus the church called itself "Margenau-Alexanderkrone" up to 1901, when Alexanderkrone became

independent. In 1910 a church building was erected in Landskrone, and since then the church calls itself "Margenau-Landskrone."

8 Thus in the **Namensverzeichnis**, of 1857.

9 See his historically highly interesting autobiographical writing **Ein Gnadenwunder. Drei Tage aus dem Leben eines Mennoniten**, at Raduga. Also see his Good Friday sermon in Elder Dirks' **Jahrbuch** of 1909.

10 Herewith we correct the name which in #63(2) was given as "Christian."

11 To the District Administrator of Berdiansk, directed to the elders Abram Goerz and Heinrich Unruh on Jan. 26, 1911. From the document it is evident that the matter had been decided positively in the interest of the Mennonites by the ministry and the provincial administration in the fall of 1910, but had been delayed by the lower officials.

12 This small work from the fruitful and skilled pen of our good colleague is of great value as a special history of a Molotschna daughter settlement during a quarter century. Available from D. J. Warkentin, Kalinovo. Post: Dzelannoe, H. A. Ediger, Berdiansk.

13 We have no particulars about the level of education and civilian position of the ministers of this church in earlier times.

14 We are not informed about the level of education and position of the clergy of this church and most of the following churches. Concerning the length of office we think we are sure only in the case of the elders and leaders who are functioning to the present, December 1910. Concerning the ministers and deacons we think we are sure up to 1905.

15 We quote the names as we find them written in the sources.

16 To whom we are indebted for many items of information and dates.

17 Certain only up to 1905.

18 Certainty assumed only for elders for the three churches of this group up to 1910, for the others up to 1905.

19 See footnote for #15, c.

20 The 6 Molotschna divisions have yearly several common church business meetings; however, independent administration is left to each division.

21 At present the only external Rueckenau-Molotschna division: all others have been declared independent since 1909; independence has also been proposed to Herzenberg; but Gniden-Blumheim disbanded because of migration? See #242.

22 Prior to this P. M. Friesen of Sevastopol had circulated a letter, dated December 11 (22, 29), 1904, directed to the elders and ministers of the Mennonite (the Mennonite Church and the M.B. Church) and Evangelical Baptist churches (a copy being sent to the Department of Spiritual Concerns, the city governor of Sevastopol, and the governor of Taurida), to announce the founding of the "Sevastopol Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood" consisting of those Mennonites who, for a shorter or longer period of time, had dwelt in Sevastopol, who desired a spiritual fellowship with him, and whose basic principle it was to have fellowship with all those who believed in Jesus Christ and demonstrated a love for all the brethren in word and deed. Friesen pointed out that the other churches were not responsible for his actions, explaining that he was completely impartial to both the Mennonite and the M.B. Church, regarding each of them as a sister church. On August 12, 1910, Friesen declared the "Sevastopol Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood" to have officially come to an end and be closed since 1) new ecclesiastical circumstances no longer appeared to make the fellowship necessary, 2) almost all male members had moved away, 3) because of Friesen's ill health, and 4) because he was leaving the house which had been officially registered as their meeting place. Friesen announced this already on June 18, 1910, to the united council meeting in Schoenwiese and on August 2 to the commission in Ekaterinoslav (cf. #295, footnote 3, above), later also officially to the government authorities. Those who continue to have spiritual fellowship with Friesen as before form a "house congregation" in a closed circle.

23 The creation of this church resulted from the fact that the M.B. Church could not, and would not carry out that which we (cf ##136, u and v, and 198) have designated as her responsibility, especially since it was placed in her cradle (cf. "Pastor Wuest" above, ##74-82, etc.). It should be noted further that the new church now called "Lichtfelde" presently stands in a most cordial relationship to the M.B. Church at the Molotschna. In Neu-Samara the Alliance Church and the M.B. Church have been formally united. Although the matter has not yet been clarified in the conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches, the former friction, bordering on open enmity, with the "free brethren" and finally with the whole Rueckenau-Molotschna M.B. Church, in the spirit of the "Waldheim Proclamation"—#198—has now become much milder. The Alliance churches have provided an alternative for those who do not wish to submit to another baptism but yet cannot accommodate themselves to the life of the Mennonite Church. As a consequence, the M.B. Church has lost (and rightly so!) its unique and dominating role as the sole "believer's church" in our midst. Nevertheless, the (not official but generally used) name of "Alliance Church" for this "Lichtfelde" congregation is not altogether correct, since most of the brethren (even all?) in it allow every believer to participate in the communion service with them under the condition that they will no longer fellowship with the "unconverted," that is, with the congregations of the Mennonite Church. The true "Evangelical Alliance" (church-historically speaking), the creation of the deceased Dr. Chalmers of 1846, was unfamiliar with this kind of ecclesiastical pressure exerted upon the conscience of a fellow brother. That is not a correct use of the term "Alliance"; it is sooner "Darbyism." That is the newest form of "Alliance" as promised by Blankenburg and the "Alliance Bible School" in Berlin which make "Alliance" into separation from all other historically organized evangelical groups. But we do not wish to judge these good and loving brethren here, and only say: "Let everyone be sure of his own convictions!" We merely desired to determine the church-historically correct meaning of the term. (For our "Alliance," cf. the concluding chapter.) Another interesting circumstance must be mentioned. The "Molotschna Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood," at its very inception, elected the ministers of the M.B. Church Jakob Reimer, Peter Unruh, and Jakob Kroeker into their council of elders, and (after the last withdrawal) Jakob Thiessen as co-elder, all of whom accepted this election. In the same way, the Tiege-Rueckenau M.B. Church made Heinrich Guenther, the elder of the "Lichtfelde" congregation, a member of their council. Aside from the Lichtfelde "Alliance Church," there exists an unorganized "Alliance (or fellowship) group" in the Molotschna and some other places which, in regard to the communion service—so we have been told—observe no formal procedures and exert no pressure on anyone. In his later years, the great evangelist Dr. F. W. Baedeker (who was always a true Alliance man in spite of his strong subjectivism and originality) often visited the areas where the "Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood" had arisen and, after 1882, frequently came to the Molotschna. Until two years ago, the equally well-known Professor Stroeter maintained a similar association. In different ways, both had a great influence upon the Christian understanding among our Mennonites, above all in the Molotschna, and there particularly among the "fellowship groups." Baedeker influenced them especially with regard to a deeper life of faith and Christian unity, Stroeter in matters relating to the recently much-discussed questions of the "Kingdom" and "body" of Christ, or the "church" or "bride" of Christ, the rapture, the first and second resurrection, the anticipated first, second (and third!) appearance of Christ. This was a truly academic and highly worthwhile six to eight years of study—at least with respect to the formal, scholarly theological aspects—for a number of gifted and educated ministers. We believe (without taking a position one way or the other here—hopefully our apprehensive and old-fashioned position in this matter is well-known—cf. #137(2) d, above) that the better and more serious persons who stood closest to this movement have achieved a great simplicity, circumspection, and tolerance. Even the "Pentecostal" movement exerted a considerable, at one point even disturbing, influence in this regard. And yet God in His grace protected our groups from all that which could have brought dishonor to His name and His cause. Here, too, we believe this to have resulted in a deeper earnestness, Christian simplicity, and tolerance. Many members of these groups are very successfully involved in society (aside from the spiritual work of the church): the schools, all benevolent and community concerns, these are all spheres in which they

exercise their "reasonable service" to God. Br. Peter Schmidt of Steinbach, the quiet but very important member of this group who died on May 30, 1910, in his fiftieth year, must be mentioned in this connection. Very subjective and opinionated in matters of faith, he was a man filled with Christ's love, brotherly love, and love for his fellow man. He quite often deviated sharply from our people in his cultural and societal, sometimes even in his Christian perspectives. But, aside from Johann Fast of Rueckenau, we have not come to know any Christian so Christ-like, who gave himself so completely to his Saviour and remained so true to his Christian insights. His benevolence, which he carried out with a marvelous simplicity, warmth, and holy objectivity before his God and which remains unsurpassed amongst us to this day, was equally massive in its extent. This, too, followed with an iron consequence from the insights he had arrived at. He was a rich man in the sense of I Tim. 16:17-19. God gave us a shining example in him, especially for our wealthy members.

24 All the statistical information given here came from "Statistical Data of the Mennonite Church of Russia at the End of 1905" by minister Heinrich Dirks. We drew a mass of information from these excellent statistics and owe a great debt of gratitude to the publisher.

25 We do not differentiate between pedagogical education proper (pedagogical courses, etc.) and independent studies—cf. #366, "School Statistics," above—but only take the fact that someone is in the teaching profession into account. At the same time, we again stress the character of our teachers (with few exceptions) as "teachers of religion." Nor, in view of their preparation for the ministry, do we cherish them less than the majority who had a seminary education (with some outstanding exceptions), especially because of the not insignificant demands placed upon them as teachers of two languages. This is particularly the case where some of these theologians took positions without having graduated from a secondary school or having received an equivalent education.

26 At present, December 1910, some six young Russian Mennonites are studying theology at German or German-speaking Swiss universities.

27 According to biographical notes from Elder Heinrich Dirks of Gnadenfeld and some additional information gathered by the author.

28 The well-known Heinrich Franz, Sr.

29 The exalted and deeply moving memorial service for Tsar Alexander II which he conducted has remained indelibly etched in our memory.

30 The honorable Br. Goerz, whom we have treated as among the "living" in our book, died suddenly on January 29, 1910, before the final printing of this section. The dear P. H. Heese died as suddenly on February 2.

31 Br. Harder has resigned from the itinerant ministry in order, at the request of the congregation, to devote all his energy to it (cf. #425, Conclusion, above).

32 Itinerant ministry in the M.B. Church, cf. #238 ff. above.

L.
CONCLUSION

1 Once more newly condensed and revised in the "Confession of Faith of the United Christian Anabaptist Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia" of 1900, printed in 1902 by P. Neufeld of Halbstadt (now "Raduga").

2 Elder D. Duerksen of Schoental, who died in 1910, belonged to the most distinguished ministers of the M.B. Church. See his ordination sermon published by "Raduga": "The minister according to the Word of God."

3 "Johann" Friesen, not "Martin" Friesen as was erroneously stated, donated this property.

4 Which we should not yet mention above in the concluding chapter, since it had not yet been confirmed at the time this book went to press.

5 We do not mean to imply that serious textual studies are to be dispised: we do not hold errors of transcription, translation, and printing to be the "Word of God."

6 The author of "The Heart of Man."

7 A burning issue in regard to the healthcare, physical development, and strengthening of our youth. One could write a whole chapter, indeed whole books, on this issue!

* * *

SUBJECT INDEX

Aberrations, 263, 277, 433

Abstinence, 334, 335

Accusations (mainly against M.B. Church in general), 260, 327, 338, 384

Admonish/ Admonisher/ Admonition, 82, 147, 229, 252, 265, 332, 349, 400

Adultery, 378, 437

Adventists, 243, 506, 540, 553, 565

Affiliated Churches/Affiliated Groups, 483ff., 489, 499, 528, 534ff., 546ff., 551, 558, 560

Agricultural/Agriculture — See also Climate, Grain, 75, 79, 111, 112, 119, 121, 176, 184, 194, 200, 502, 505, 643, 663, 705, 854, 855, 871, 872

Agricultural Society/Agriculture Society, 118, 135, 143, 190ff., 197, 198, 199, 203, 357, 359, 402, 728, 754, 791, 792, 797, 798

Aid — See also Patriotism, 563, 576

Alliance, 37, 227, 294, 341, 456, 457, 532, 669, 918, 976, 979

Almanac, 834

Alsace, 14, 15, 40, 79

Alternative Service — See also Forestry Service, 495, 571

America — See also Emigration To America, 22, 40, 70, 87, 173, 199, 524, 608, 682

American Baptist Missionary Union — See also Missionary Union, 675

Amsterdam, 10, 22, 33, 35, 36, 47, 88, 159, 294

Anabaptists — See also Dutch Anabaptists, 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 29, 37, 42, 43, 48, 72, 73, 77, 78, 79, 80, 130, 133, 171, 254, 290, 292, 293, 294, 296, 298, 307, 311, 327, 330, 336, 340, 356, 478, 664, 832, 979

Anabaptist Illness (tendency to disunity), 31, 108

Antichrist, 93, 94, 219

Antinomianism, 416, 435, 441, 442

Antitrinitarianism, 32

Apostles, 39, 328, 331, 334, 380, 392, 416, 417, 418, 427

Apostolic Succession, 172, 173

Apostoolites — See also Sunites, 40

Area Administrative Office, 233, 236, 238, 312, 314, 315, 318, 319, 321, 340, 342, 344, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 363, 371, 379, 381, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 394, 398, 401, 402, 403, 405, 407, 474, 541, 550, 699, 708, 715, 724, 732, 848

Arminian(s), 33, 100

Arms — See also Rifles, Weapons, 74, 289, 465, 587, 588, 605

Arrests — See also Imprisonment, 536, 649

Art (appreciated by Dutch Mennonites), 78

Artisans — See also Tradesmen, 186

Artists (Dutch Mennonites as supporters of . . .), 78

Assessment — See also Assets, Statistics, Taxation, Wealth, 616, 617, 621, 926

Assets — See also Assessment, Prosperity, Statistics, Taxation, Wealth, 616, 617, 866

Association School — see Ohrloff Association School

Ausgang aus dem Papsttum, 15, 18, 118, 212

Austria, Austrian Lands, 14, 20, 46, 63

Avoidance — See also Ban, Shunning, 244, 437

Babel, 8, 128, 131, 210

Baertler — See also Beards, 40

Ban — See also Avoidance, Shunning, 17, 18, 31, 32, 65, 92, 129, 132, 197, 198, 229, 232, 244, 251, 268, 275, 276, 294, 314, 326, 347, 348, 380, 390, 404, 418, 419, 420, 428, 431, 433, 434, 437, 441, 549

Bankruptcy — See also Boycott, Economic Ruin, 348

Baptism — See also Infant Baptism, 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 15, 23, 24, 33, 40, 42, 59, 98, 99, 101, 130, 173, 192, 227, 231, 256, 284, 286, 288, 289ff., 305, 306, 307, 308, 310, 311, 314, 315, 316, 317, 328 329, 360, 369, 379, 398, 449, 459, 470, 477, 492, 519, 520, 553, 558, 562, 570, 634, 664, 683, 923

Baptism by immersion, 33, 261, 284, 285, 286, 287, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 305, 307, 316, 372, 380, 392, 408, 456, 458, 567, 571, 925

Baptism by pouring, 286, 292, 293, 295, 299, 300, 301, 306, 308, 317

Baptism by sprinkling, 292, 298, 300, 301, 306, 307, 308, 327, 470

Baptism of infants — See infant baptism

Baptism of the Spirit, 306, 307, 311

Baptism under open sky, 650

Baptists, 38, 47, 288, 289, 296, 298, 304, 310, 458, 459, 462, 463, 465, 476, 477, 479, 508, 514, 532, 557

Baptistry/Baptistries, 292

Barley Affair/Barley Dispute/Barley Story, 109, 114, 246, 262, 355

Barmen Mission House, 669, 830

Basel Seminary, 37

Bavaria, 14, 20

Beards — See also *Baertler*, 31, 504

Beer (Brewing), 119, 184, 185, 643

Bethany — See: Mental Hospital

Bethel College, 37

Bible — See also Gospel, Holy Scriptures, New Testament, Scriptures, Word Of God, 4, 130, 132, 137, 138, 180, 267, 273

Bible Courses/ Bible School/ Bible Study, 33, 72, 99, 101, 104, 180, 467, 611, 720, 835, 976

Bible Society/Bible Societies, 94, 131, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 193, 264, 636

Biographies of ministers — See also Ministers, 928ff., 943ff., 958, 959

Bohemian Brethren/Bohemian-Moravian Brethren — See also Moravian Brethren, 10, 42, 43, 47

Books/Book-burning, 25, 256, 275, 325, 335, 380

Book Business/ Book-Shop/ Book-Store, 477, 540, 838, 841, 866, 869

Botschafter, 833, 835, 838

Bowling, 61

Boxer Rebellion (contributing to Red Cross during . . .), 829

Boycott — See also Bankruptcy, Economic Ruin, 363, 364

Brandy (Distilling), 119, 184, 185

Bread-Breakers, 278, 441, 452, 474

Brotherhood School, 106, 107, 204, 359, 453, 456

Brotherhood School Dispute, 262

Building(s) — See also Church Buildings, School Buildings, 153, 183, 185, 186, 188, 196, 504

Bulgarian immigrants, 584, 585

Businesses — See also Trade and

Commerce, 524, 686, 866ff.

Business School, 556, 722, 773, 882

Calwer Bibel Lexikon/Calwer Church Lexicon/Calwer Kirchenlexikon, 39, 158, 172, 291, 292, 299

Capital punishment, 330, 332

Capitalists, 121

Catechism, 32, 59, 316, 431, 638, 649, 832, 834

Catholic(s)/Catholic Church — See also Roman Catholics, 3, 11, 48, 108, 163, 172, 310, 513, 540, 548, 632, 642, 749, 844

Cattle/Cattle-Raising/Cows, 83, 112, 121, 122, 185, 187, 189, 194, 198, 406, 410, 415, 426, 504, 505, 644, 696, 820, 854, 880

Caucasus, 108, 189, 257, 259, 355, 371, 406, 413, 415

Charter Of Liberties — See also Charter Of Privileges, 258

Charity — See also Welfare, 51

Charter Of Privileges — See also Freedoms, Liberties, Privileges, 49, 88, 119, 120, 153, 154, 586, 592, 607, 632 642, 643, 829

Children Of Grace, 225

Church And State, 17, 103, 238, 259, 570, 652

Church buildings, 68, 184, 493, 494, 495, 510, 525, 541, 542, 547, 548, 549, 553, 558, 559, 563

Church discipline — See Discipline

Church leadership — See also Clergy, Ministers, Spiritual leadership, 528ff., 534ff., 540, 543ff., 551, 553, 560ff., 563ff., 566, 885ff., 905ff.

Church manual, 656

Church records, 566, 633, 634, 639, 653

Church register(s), 460, 640, 641, 645

Church services, 20, 68, 69, 98, 164, 395, 397, 398, 417

Church services of M.B.'s, 395ff.

Churches under the cross, 11, 15, 43,

Civic matters, 610

Civil authorities — See also Area Administrative Office, Colonial administrators/ Governmental agencies, 333, 390

Civil law — See also Courts, Law, 251, 304, 305

Civil liberties — See also Charter Of Liberties, Civil rights, Privileges, 268

Civil office (non-acceptance of), 132

Civil rights — See also Civil liberties, Privileges, 251, 259, 260, 304, 346, 348, 356, 409

Civil service, 120, 643

Class war (among Mennonites), 123

Cleanliness, 75

Clergy — Seel also Biographies of ministers, Church leadership, ministers, Spiritual leadership, 885ff., 905ff., 911ff., 927ff.

Climate, 189, 854, 855, 871

Cloth manufacturing — See also Factories, 872, 879

Clothes/Clothing — See also Dress, 182, 623

Co-Education, 768

Colonial Administrators/Colonial Authorities/Colonial Officials — See also Civil Authorities, 54, 91, 115, 118, 121, 128, 129, 131, 132, 191, 193, 203, 204, 246, 258, 315, 346, 349, 351, 403, 407

Colonization, 851ff.

Committee of Public Safety (French), 80

Communion — See also Lord's Supper, 3, 4, 15, 61, 129, 228, 231, 256, 290, 294, 296, 298, 301, 310, 332, 360, 369, 386, 396, 397, 398, 421, 498, 532, 562, 634

Communion in private homes, 378, 389

Communion service — See also Lord's Supper, 51, 62, 68, 100, 128, 160, 227, 228, 229, 230, 260, 302, 457, 458, 463, 473

Communion with unleavened bread, 296

Community of goods, 63, 132, 336

Compulsory military service — See also Alternative service, Forestry service, Military service, 586ff., 601, 604

Confession of Faith, 32, 202, 288, 302, 431, 478, 480, 491, 512, 513, 532, 604, 605, 637, 832, 923, 924

Conscience(s), 8, 50, 61, 63, 125, 135, 145, 216, 229, 230, 234, 235, 239, 250, 270, 277, 285, 305, 319, 320, 331, 375, 378, 379, 384, 390, 392, 398, 403, 407, 418, 435, 438, 452, 472, 478, 589, 590, 592, 595, 601, 606, 644, 652, 923, 978

Contribution to national needs — See also Patriotism and its cross-referenced items, 830

Conversion(s), 10, 40, 124, 164, 485, 486, 489, 552

Corporal punishment, 446

Corrupt church — See also Decadence, 386

Corruption, 202, 240

Cossacks, 401, 512, 580, 594

Council of Church Leaders, 107, 204, 255, 354, 356, 358, 408, 471, 748, 761, 807, 810, 811

Council of Elders, 169, 171, 258

Council of Ministers, 154

Council of Trent, 292

Courts — See also Civil law, Law, 315, 323, 354, 427, 489, 643

Credit Union, 737

Crimea/Crimean Peninsula, 88, 94, 105, 188, 278, 351, 352, 354, 360, 418, 520, 552, 576, 801, 835, 851, 861, 864

Crimean War — See also Patriotism, 585, 702, 703, 705, 829

Cross, 7, 8, 151, 210, 215, 216, 690

Cross of Christ, 2, 6, 7, 16, 149

Customs, 74, 75, 179, 317, 371, 441, 528

Dance, Dancing, 60, 61, 84, 266, 267, 275, 276, 326, 332, 380, 395, 417, 422, 432, 435, 436, 439, 444, 503

Danzig, 36, 39, 41, 46, 48, 53, 61, 64, 68, 79, 87, 114, 128, 131, 133, 160, 171, 832

Daughter colonies (of the Molotschna), 851, 852

Deacons, 50, 75, 160, 171, 288, 297

Deaconesses — See also "Moria", 69, 70, 665, 740, 810, 815, 825, 828

Decadence/Decadent (Mennonite) Churches — See also Corrupt Church, 230, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 247, 254

Deaf-And-Mute School — See: School For Deaf-Mutes

Democracy (Mennonite attitude towards political . . .), 627

Despotism, 274, 275, 338, 416, 428, 433, 437, 442, 443

Devil — See also Satan, 3, 230, 235, 237, 240, 268, 420, 429, 608

Devotional literature, 833, 834

Diet of Marienburg (discussing Mennonites), 48

Discipline, 15, 17, 40, 42, 52, 53, 60, 75, 84, 128, 132, 221, 234, 235, 237, 241, 244, 250, 347, 382, 386, 419 426, 428, 556, 570, 639, 720, 908, 923

Discord — See also Quarrel, 154, 155

Disorder, 154

Dissension — See also Quarrel(s), Strife, 31, 128, 207, 352, 353, 419, 432, 503, 511

Disturbing the peace, 398, 399

Division — See also Factions, Schism, Secession, Separation, 92, 114, 153, 155, 211, 274, 297, 423, 440

Divisive spirit, 477

Doctrinal Statement Of The M.B. Church, 445

Doctrine of freedom, 271, 273, 275, 276

Dompelaars, 47, 293, 294, 297, 298

Dompelaar dispute (quarrel about baptism), 296

Doopsgezinde, 31, 35, 40, 77, 84, 828

Dortrecht Confession, 18, 32

Doukhobors, 189, 194

Drama (attitude towards), 655

Dress — See also Clothes, 93, 294

Drinking — See also Drunkards, Drunkenness, Liquor, Tavern, 3, 61, 84, 111, 147, 332, 333

Drowning (during early persecutions of Anabaptists), 19, 23, 24, 25, 27

Drum(s) — See also Tambourine, 275, 276, 432, 436

Drunkards, 231, 240, 332

Drunkenness, 60, 88, 234, 333

Duma, 631, 652

Dutch Anabaptists — See also Anabaptists, 29, 31, 34, 41, 88, 97, 659

Dutch Indies — See also Missions, Foreign Missions, 659ff.

Dutch Mennonites, 34, 35, 38, 39, 46, 49, 78, 79, 99

Dysentery, 907

Ecclesiastical rights, 250, 274, 346

Ecclesiastical rules and regulations, 631, 635

Economic ruin — See also Bankruptcy, Boycott, 346, 363, 364

Economy — See also Agriculture, Factories, Mills, Sheep, Silk Industry, Trade and Commerce, 504, 505, 540, 546, 705, 843ff., 871ff.

Education — See also Business school, Co-Education, Freedom to teach, Girls' High School, Model School, Pedagogical Training, Privileges, Religion in schools, School, Secondary Schools, Teachers, Textbooks, Village schools, Village teachers, 15, 39, 96, 97, 101, 111, 113, 140, 502, 556, 652, 689ff., 786, 792

Education, Aversion to/Fear of, 95, 715, 786

Education of ministers — See also Theological Studies, 927

Elbing-(Ellerwalde), 36, 39, 41, 58, 61, 84

Elders, 50, 51, 52, 128, 129, 130, 143, 153, 171, 173, 204, 228, 229, 233, 236, 238, 239, 242, 243, 260, 316, 387, 388, 638, 639, 645

Election of Elders/Ministers, 104, 242, 314, 339, 347, 379, 391, 398, 497, 562, 910

Embezzlement, 116, 117

Emigration, 91, 98, 100

Emigration to America — See also America, 34, 46, 50, 94, 185, 278, 475, 495, 497, 500, 506, 512, 513, 514, 517, 572, 586, 590, 591, 597, 599, 600, 607, 862

Emigration to Canada, 652

Emigration to Russia, 46, 50, 64, 87, 99

Emotionalism, 163, 164, 208, 267, 281, 338, 417, 424, 425, 442

Emperor — See also Tsar, 119, 159, 173ff., 180, 185, 190, 271, 345, 346, 371, 382, 474, 579, 602, 652

Empress — See also Tsarina, 54, 87, 88, 164, 185, 371, 830, 856

Enthusiastic movement/Enthusiasts, 107, 273, 325, 327, 445, 459, 491

Evangelical/ Evangelism/ Evangelists, 4, 31, 71, 141, 332, 498, 506, 682

Excessive exuberance — See also Enthusiastic Movement, Exuberance, 223, 262, 275, 427, 430, 433

Excommunication, 51, 58, 59, 60, 61, 92, 197, 229, 262, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 314, 325, 332, 385, 404, 417, 418, 419, 423, 426, 427, 430, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 439, 440, 464, 485, 542, 565

Examples/Exemplary life, 75, 153, 600, 643, 884, 856

Exile, 143, 153, 313

Expression of joy — Seel also Jumping, Shouts of joy, 397

Externals — See also Outward Forms, 31, 32, 294

Extremists (among "Joyous"), 223, 225

Exuberance/Exuberant movement — See also Enthusiasts, Excessive Exuberance, Expressions of joy, Jumping, Shouts of joy, 250, 258, 261, 262, 263, 268, 270, 275, 282, 290, 326, 338, 339, 416, 417, 425, 454, 457, 464, 474

Factions — See also Schism, Secession, Separatism, 31, 52, 459, 460

Factories, 105, 188, 500, 524, 534, 540, 643, 686, 848, 866, 869, 872, 874, 879

False accusations, 243

False doctrines, 435

False freedom, 511

False liberty, 385

False movement, 223, 341

False teachers, 129, 146, 427

False teaching, 271, 326, 377, 380, 418

Famine — See also Food kitchens, 585

Fanatics/Fanaticism, 2, 43, 49, 208, 210, 211, 237, 312, 330, 380, 387, 390, 500, 501, 570

Farming/Farms — See also Agriculture, Grain, 122, 153, 183

Fasting, 94, 100, 276, 300, 429, 436, 448

Fatherland — See also Patriotism, Tsar 180, 346, 575, 586, 590, 596, 603, 604, 613, 633, 650, 702, 705, 822

Fire insurance, 123, 184

Flax, 181

Flemish — See also Old-Flemish, 31, 32, 50, 52, 53, 59, 60, 62, 64, 71, 91, 93, 94, 95, 100, 112, 117, 129, 133, 166, 170, 204, 254, 297, 298, 515, 832

Food kitchens — See also Famine, 831

Footwashing, 42, 100, 133, 232, 288, 289, 294, 296, 380, 425, 562

Foreign Mission — See also Missions, Missionaries, 69, 70, 469, 476, 551, 653, 657, 659ff., 976

Foreign Missions of M.B.'s, 674ff.

Forestry camps — See also Alternative Service, Assessment, Taxation, Voting Rights, 278, 528, 596, 598, 603, 609, 612, 614, 615, 621, 624, 646, 654, 655, 668, 743, 759, 828, 851, 862, 865, 866

Forgiveness, 94, 100, 281, 428, 439, 441

Foundation/*Foundation of Christian Doctrine*, 10, 15, 17, 231, 386, 400, 408, 431

Foundation of Faith, 179, 399

Founding Document (of 1860), 284

Frankfurt/Main, 813

Frederick II/Frederick the Great, 49, 63, 77, 87, 98, 198

Free Academy — See also Agriculture Society, Juschanlee Farm, 193

Free movement, 243, 267, 273, 550

Free thinkers, 628

Free will, 33, 100

Freedom(s) — See also Liberty, Priv-

ileges, 112, 346, 369, 548

Freedom of conscience, 29, 80, 138, 250, 270, 351, 421, 630, 635

Freedom of religion — See also Charter of privileges, 29, 64, 87, 119, 241, 250, 256, 496, 589, 607, 627, 630, 631, 643

Freedom to teach, 400

French Assembly, 198

Fresenburg, 14, 296

Friedensglocke, 208, 376, 379, 380

Friedensstimme, 820, 826, 834

Friends of Jerusalem, 103, 105, 107, 109, 223, 230, 312, 356, 358, 419, 454, 503, 506, 542

Friesland, 14, 170

Frisian — See also Old Frisian, 31, 32, 50, 52, 53, 62, 64, 71, 91, 93, 94, 95, 100, 112, 117, 133, 168, 170, 204, 254, 293, 515, 832

Frugality — See also Thrift, 75, 76

Fruit trees — See: Trees

Funeral/Funeral oration, 152, 937

Furniture, 186, 874

Furor Mennoniticus, 571

Galenists, 40

Gardens/Gardening — See also Horticulture, Nursery, 113, 122, 153, 174, 183, 184, 186, 188, 191, 194, 197, 198, 415, 538, 540, 668, 813

Gemeindeblatt, 71

General Conference, 646

German language — See also Low German, 37, 137, 179, 184, 315, 374, 395, 411, 441, 469, 479, 538, 556, 593, 628, 654, 712, 716, 745, 753

Germany, 36, 40, 41, 42, 47, 50, 70, 110, 115, 163, 186, 222, 286, 293, 659, 660, 828

Girls' school/Girls' high school/Girls' secondary school — See also Co-Education, 180, 531, 556, 710, 736, 768, 770ff., 845

Glaubensstimme, 287

Gold medal — See: Medals

Good works, 124, 148

Gospel — See also Bible, Holy Scriptures, New Testament, Scriptures, Word of God, 16, 72, 138, 155, 180, 207, 222, 250, 345, 370, 447, 630, 660

Governmental agencies/Governmental authorities — See also Civil authorities, Colonial officials, 192, 370

Governmental intervention (in closing of Tiege church), 547, 548

Grace, 16, 33, 93, 100, 107, 136, 157, 208, 211, 212, 215, 226, 261, 264, 268, 281, 302, 328, 338, 377, 383, 385, 396, 429, 442, 635

Grain, 121, 122, 175, 176, 178, 181, 183, 186, 504, 562, 563, 583, 616, 618

Haeftler, 40

Hamburg (Altona), 11, 14, 36, 39, 40, 99, 296, 297, 340, 463

Hardships of settlers - See also Terek Settlement, 413, 425, 461ff.

Hebrew Colonies — See also Jews, 283, 290, 616, 847

Heretic/Heresy/Heresies, 9, 22, 277, 283, 313

Hermann Peters Brethren/Hermann Peters Church, 278, 468, 509

Herold der Wahrheit, 72

Herrnhut, 43, 141, 212

High Germans/High German Mennonites — See South Germans

History books, 833

History of the Mennonite Brethren Church, 108, 277, 280, 283, 286

Holiness movement, 491

Holy Communion — See also Com-

munion, Lord's Supper, 17, 237, 239, 241, 316, 317, 331, 348, 378, 380, 386

Holy kiss — See also Kiss, 380

Holy Scriptures — See also Bible, Gospel, New Testament, Scriptures, Word of God, 230, 236, 239, 240, 251, 256, 267, 282, 308, 320, 347, 400, 430, 636

Holy Spirit, 3, 5, 15, 16, 32, 123, 126, 132, 140, 223, 245, 306, 307, 328, 333, 335, 383, 441, 458, 494, 660

Holy Synod, 549

Homes for the aged, 809, 821, 822, 976

Home Missions, 70, 81, 106, 362

Home tutor — See also Tutor, 374

Horses, 83, 122, 174, 175, 176, 181, 182, 185, 186, 187, 189, 191, 200, 696

Horticulture, 705, 856, 872

Hospitals — See also Deaconesses, Medical services, 69, 583, 585, 664, 810, 815ff., 830

Hospital service (suggested as alternative service), 598

Hospitality (towards Russian soldiers), 580

Huepfer, 208, 250, 355, 375, 384, 385, 392, 441, 442, 443

Hungary, 15, 22, 63

Hussites, 10, 42

Hutterian Brethren/Hutterites, 63, 64, 164, 588, 592, 843, 844

Huttertal, 22

Illegitimacy, 75, 258, 409

Immersion — See: Baptism by immersion

Immersionists, 31, 94, 293, 302

Immorality, 61, 94, 102, 131, 271, 330, 333, 392

Imprisonment/Incarceration — See also Arrest, Jail, Prison, 115, 129, 243, 244, 324, 348, 349, 350, 381, 402, 454

India — See also Nalgonda, Telugus, 476, 555, 675, 835

Industry/ Industries/ Industrialists — See also Factories, Mills, Sheep industry, Silk industry, Trade and Commerce, 200, 536, 872

Infant baptism, 1, 2, 4, 24, 42, 130, 302, 330, 392, 570

Inheritance practices/ Regulations, 120, 809

Inner history (of founding of M.B. Church), 201

Intellectuals/Intelligentsia, 506, 613

Intermarriage — See also Mixed Marriages, 64, 65, 237

Intermediate school — See also Secondary schools, 95

Itinerant ministers/Itinerant ministry/Itinerant preachers, 70, 105, 289, 416, 425, 449, 466, 475, 476, 484, 486, 513, 514, 515, 516, 518, 519, 521, 522, 524, 539, 545, 546, 559, 564, 565, 609, 656, 683, 835, 969ff.

Jaeckelsbrueder, 474

Jail — See also Prison, 19, 116, 117, 313, 318, 322, 448

Java, 664, 665, 673

Japanese War — See: Russo-Japanese War

Jesus-Fire (sermon), 670ff.

Jews/Jewish — See also Hebrew Colonies, 142, 191, 194, 305, 540, 547, 548, 611, 754, 875, 880

Joyous/Joyous Brethren — See also Exuberance, 223, 225, 258, 263, 454

Jumping — See also Expressions of joy, 208, 380, 422, 432, 442

June Reforms, 260, 271, 274, 276, 282, 339, 341, 436, 441, 457, 460

Juschanlee Farm, 190, 191, 192, 193

Justification (through faith), 16, 211,

385, 451

Kerls (men in forestry camps), 612

Kingdom of God, 329, 340, 435, 437, 441, 475, 497, 511, 553, 607

Kirchenkonvent, 356

Kirchliches Handlexikon, 291, 294, 299

Kiss — See also Holy Kiss, 156, 273, 368, 421, 423, 440, 445, 447, 513

Kleine Gemeinde, 88, 93, 94, 95, 109, 127, 131, 133, 134, 198, 204, 236, 238, 251, 254, 255, 268, 281, 282, 346, 355, 387, 389, 403, 407, 409, 457, 494, 507, 508, 545, 570, 591, 832, 979

Krimmer M.B. Church/Krimmer Mennonite Church/Krimmer Mennonites, 134, 278, 304, 591, 605, 608

Kuban/Kuban Settlement, 108, 201, 243, 257, 259, 260, 274, 275, 277, 325, 327, 339, 342, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 410, 412, 414, 415, 416, 418, 422, 425, 436, 454, 468, 474, 490, 496, 503, 507, 540

Lambites, 34, 40

Land/Land ownership/Land purchase, 185, 355, 363, 367, 372, 405, 406, 454, 493, 509, 524, 618, 843ff.

Land affair/Land controversy/Land matter/Land question/Land quarrel, 123, 490, 854, 855, 856

Landless, 109, 123, 348, 355, 509, 540, 558, 561, 564, 565, 822, 854, 855

Large congregation, 93, 94, 96, 135, 143, 152, 170, 197, 198, 203, 204

Law — See also Civil law, Courts, 81, 275, 276, 327, 353, 356, 370, 381

Lease-hold Colonies, 844, 845

Leprosy Asylum, 664, 665

Liberty/Liberties — See also Freedom, Privileges, 319, 320, 448, 527

Liquor — See also Drinking, 423

Literary Society, 96, 193

Lithuania, 46, 49

Lord's Prayer, 69, 131, 776

Lord's Supper — See also Communion, Holy Communion, Open Communion, 6, 15, 94, 112, 129, 130, 136, 137, 160, 171, 231, 285, 288, 289, 290, 315, 316, 380, 387, 390, 425, 477, 660, 923

Loss of membership, 639

Lots, 129, 276, 438, 465

Low German, 395, 469, 538, 628

Lumber yard, 105

Luther, 4, 15, 18, 33, 171, 172, 431

Lutherans/Lutheranism, 38, 42, 43, 72, 100, 108, 140, 163, 172, 205, 208, 209, 210, 211, 227, 250, 261, 288, 304, 310, 327, 380, 400, 474, 513, 519, 540, 550, 632, 704, 749, 820, 844

M.B. Confession of Faith, 50

M.B. growth, 468, 475, 489, 498, 511, 523, 533, 544, 555, 558

M.B. origin, 457

M.B. reforms, 453

M.B. sins, 646

M.B. suspicions, 645

Machines, Machinery, 175, 176, 181, 185, 866, 869

Mad year, 442, 453, 456, 457

Magistrate, 17, 25, 47

Male nurses (lack of . . .), 827

Manager-Ministers (in forestry service), 611, 622

Manufacturers, 735, 875

Maria Deaf-Mute School — See: School For Deaf-Mutes

Marriage — See also Illegitimacy, Intermarriage, Mixed marriages, 61, 62, 159, 256, 258, 259, 303, 304, 316, 317, 337, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 477, 525, 556, 557, 634, 639, 656

Martin Luther — See: Luther

Martyr(s) — See also Persecution, Torture, 14, 19, 22, 79, 132, 143, 152, 198, 387, 454

Martyr's Mirror, 14, 19, 133, 293, 307

Materialism, 591, 979

Medal(s), 54, 88, 159, 193, 474

Medical aid — See also Hospitals, 577, 579

Medical corps (suggested as alternative service), 598

Medical orderlies, 705, 829

Medical services — See also Deaconisses, Hospitals, 587, 588

Mennoberg, 14

Mennolinde, 14

Mennonite Council of Church Leaders — See: Council of Church Leaders

Mennonite Rights — See Charter of Privileges, Freedoms, Liberties, Rights, Privileges

Mennonitische Blaetter, 36, 65, 71, 81, 97, 208, 233, 238, 252, 254, 376, 382, 393, 398, 828

Mennonitische Rundschau, 71, 72, 123, 159, 628

Mennonitism, 310, 311

Mennostone, 14

Mennostueck, 14

Mental hospital/Mental illness, 654, 809, 810, 835, 843

Methodism/Methodists, 38, 173, 205, 282, 291

Military (Service) Law, 478, 592, 605, 629, 631

Military service — See also Alternative service, Forestry service, 17, 40, 42, 50, 74, 80, 84, 87, 120, 137, 260, 278, 288, 295, 463, 513, 570, 572, 578, 586, 589, 596, 598, 608, 609, 610, 615, 643, 746, 749

Military Training (excellence of Russian . . .), 703

Millennium, 93, 130, 131, 308, 311

Mill(s), 184, 185, 187, 504, 538, 540, 686, 866, 869, 875, 876

Ministers, 37, 38, 51, 53, 91, 171, 172, 173, 210, 430, 634, 635, 843ff., 927, 928, 965, 966

Ministers' remuneration/Ministers' Salaries, 38, 513, 634, 635, 927, 928, 965, 966

Missions — See also Dutch Indies, Foreign Missions, India, Nalgonda, Sumatra, Telugus, 97, 101, 141, 503, 505

Mission festivals, 97, 99, 102, 206, 208, 223, 377, 469, 670ff., 686, 972

Mission Society/Missionary Society, 341, 659, 660, 674

Missionary/Missionaries — See also Foreign Missions, 36, 106, 141, 142, 555, 556, 612, 636, 659ff., 928

Missionary Schools, 467

Missionary Union — See also American Baptist Missionary Union, 680, 682

Mixed marriages — See also Intermarriage, 50, 53, 84, 294, 310, 593

Model farm — See also Juschanlee Farm, 193

Model school, 739, 744

Mohammedans — See Muslims

Monuments, 580, 879

Morality (decline of . . .), 979

Moravia, 15, 20, 21, 46

Moravian Brethren/Moravian Brethren Church — See also Bohemian Brethren, 10, 38, 43, 71, 74, 100, 101, 103, 141, 142, 173, 205, 341, 359, 786

Moria — See also Deaconisses, 819

Muenster/ Muenster Anabaptists/ Muensterites/ Muensterite Sect, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8

Murder, 118

Music — See also Singing, Organs, 60, 235, 275, 276, 380, 395, 417, 422, 432, 439, 443, 503, 537, 546, 715, 718

Muslims, 305, 542, 548

Mystics/ Mystically-Rationalistic, 34, 158

Nalgonda — See also Telugus, 679, 682ff., 835

Nature, contemplation of, 537

Netherlands, 9, 11, 14, 22, 29, 33, 35, 40, 41, 43, 47, 49, 73, 76, 110

New Testament — See also Bible, Gospel, Holy Scriptures, Scriptures, Word Of God, 4, 39, 306

Newspapers, 835, 838

Nihilism, 594

Nogai/Nogai Plains/Nogai Steppes, 98, 122, 142, 188, 191, 194, 247, 267, 350, 360, 401

Nogat (building of dams on river . . .), 48

Nonresistance — See also Charter Of Privileges, Forestry Service, Military Service, 58, 77, 80, 154, 192, 296, 476, 575, 586, 587, 588, 589, 604, 605, 607, 608, 629

Nursery (plants) — See also Garden, 184

Oath(s), 11, 17, 33, 40, 42, 74, 80, 119, 130, 154, 295, 296, 334, 643

Obbenites, 2, 3

Obscurantism, 786

Octobrists, 627

Ohmstube/Ohmstuebchen, 51, 68

Ohrloff Association School/Ohrloff School Society/Ohrloff (Secondary) School/Ohrloff Society School, 96, 106, 109, 114, 541, 546, 689, 693, 699, 714, 715, 717, 720, 723, 852

Old Age Fund/Old Age Pension Plan, (for some teachers), 723, 790, 814

Old Age Home — See Homes for the aged

Old-Flemish, 32, 52, 53, 62, 71, 93, 95, 133, 168, 170, 293, 296, 298, 455

Old Frisians, 31, 32, 62, 170, 294

Old Fritz — See Frederick II

Old Mennonite (Church), 51, 310, 786

Old Testament — See also Bible, 171

Open communion — See also Alliance, Communion, Lord's Supper

Oppression (of M.B. Church), — See also Persecution, 244, 312, 346

Orchards — See Trees

Ordination, 52, 93, 129, 130, 135, 144, 170, 171, 172, 173, 243, 294, 424, 465, 497, 531, 554, 555, 562, 565, 633, 634, 638

Organs/Organ Music, 68, 111, 443

Orphans, 120, 693, 697, 724

Orphanage, 668, 810, 825, 828

Orthodox (Non-Mennonite) Christians/ Orthodox Church/Orthodox Provost/Orthodox Russians, 54, 116, 264, 542, 548, 584, 593, 632

Orthodoxy (in Mennonite groups) — See also Strict Orthodoxy, 32, 35, 95, 154, 224, 591, 594, 699, 976

Outward forms — See also Externals, 157

Overjoyous — See also Exuberance, 539

Palatinate, 14, 15, 34, 36, 40, 49, 63, 70

Panslavism, 594

Paradise Lost and *Paradise Regained*, 47

Pass(es)/Passport(s) — See also Travel Permits, Visas, 257, 258, 348, 350, 354, 355, 363, 364, 365, 366, 369, 372, 373, 381, 403

Patriotism — See also Aid, Boxer Rebellion, Bulgarian immigrants, Contribution to national needs,

Crimean War, Food kitchens, Hospitality, Hospitals, Medical Aid, Monuments, Poetry, Red Cross, Tsar, Wars, 58, 76, 97, 114, 180, 200, 575, 579, 583, 628, 652 702, 703, 704, 705, 712, 713, 828, 958

Peasant's War (Germany), 2

Pedagogical training/Pedagogy — See also Teacher training, 719, 744, 784

Pennsylvania Dutch, 628

Pension plan — See Old Age Pension Plan

Periodicals — See also Publications, 834, 835, 838, 841

Persecutions, 1, 2, 5, 9, 11, 14, 19ff., 27, 31, 32, 34, 41, 42, 43, 46, 47, 48, 49, 72, 93, 235, 251, 260, 271, 280, 314, 319, 320, 324, 327, 330, 346, 348, 350, 351, 352, 354, 381, 395, 446, 447, 469, 511, 604

Petition(s) — See also Promemoria, 245, 246, 250, 251, 254, 268, 301, 315, 318, 345, 346, 352, 354, 355, 363, 366, 367, 368, 371, 374, 382, 405, 406, 448, 479, 526, 549, 588, 595, 602, 624, 641, 643, 650

Pictures, 78, 325, 440

Pietism, 103, 105, 212, 467, 506, 571, 699, 701

Pietists, 47, 71, 73, 74, 97, 205, 227, 296, 454, 786

Pilgrim's Progress, 47, 962

Planers (Lutheran group), 206

Playing of cards, 60, 84

Plumemoos, 623

Plymouth Brethren, 291

Podvoden/Podvod, 579, 580

Poetry, 537, 715, 834, 949ff.

Poland, 32, 33, 41, 43, 50, 288, 567

Police — See also Arrest, Imprisonment, Jail, Prison, 92, 101, 251, 257, 312, 313, 315, 318, 322, 348, 356, 489, 525, 526, 536, 548, 559, 608, 642

Political conservatism, 627

Political measures/Politics, 96, 139, 143, 238, 627

Polygamy, (of Muensterites) 6, (alleged) 337

Poor (People)/The Poor/Poverty, 51, 69, 75, 84, 336, 497, 504, 540, 553, 563, 634, 644, 693, 724, 828, 851, 857, 859, 876, 906, 908

Pouring — See Baptism by pouring

Prayer — See also Lord's Prayer, 18, 51, 94, 131, 282, 287, 302, 337, 395, 396, 397, 418, 429, 432, 448, 492, 542, 654, 832, 860

Prayer meeting (s), 283, 611, 692, 694

Preachers — See Ministers

Predestinarian, 33, 295, 331

Printing/Printing press/Printing shop, 11, 24, 556, 736, 831, 838

Prison — See also Jail, 20, 117, 318, 321, 323, 324, 325, 326, 430, 436, 444, 445, 448, 454

Private school, 692, 708, 736, 754, 845

Privileges — See also Charter Of Privileges, 32, 46, 49, 50, 97, 98, 121, 138, 154, 199, 230, 256, 319, 346, 351, 360, 361, 362, 367, 370, 379, 400, 404, 409, 410, 412, 464, 465, 513, 595, 598, 604

Procedure against M.B.'s, 402, 409

Promemoria, — See also Petitions, 250, 258, 301, 319, 345, 346, 402, 403, 406

Property — See also Assets, Assessment, Prosperity, Wealth, 120, 336, 616, 618, 643, 644

Prophets, 232, 332, 334, 335

Proselytize — See also Religious propaganda, 283, 381

Prosperity — See also Assets, Assessment, Wealth, 98, 122, 851, 854, 857, 883

Protection (Mennonites seeking from government . . . against other Mennonites), 353, 355

Protestant(s)/Protestantism — See also Lutherans, 17, 52, 63, 74, 76, 171, 172, 173, 264, 304, 479, 548, 632

Prussia, 41, 42, 43, 46, 47, 48, 52, 54, 63, 71, 76, 91, 92, 101, 110, 112, 121, 128, 129, 130, 131, 135, 143, 152, 156, 160, 163, 171, 175, 182, 183, 186, 188, 190, 604, 660, 708, 709, 710, 831, 832, 871, 880

Prussian Mennonites, 33, 38, 39, 46, 50, 54, 57, 58, 70, 75, 76, 87, 127, 153, 156, 170

Psychiatric institution — See Mental Hospital

Publications — See also *Botschafter, Gemeindeblatt, Mennonitische Blaetter, Mennonitische Rundschau,* Newspapers, Periodicals, 71, 831ff.

Punishment, 237, 245, 246, 283, 355, 390

Pure Flemish Church, 95

Quarrel(s) — See also Dissension, Strife, 31, 32, 62, 107, 108, 109, 117, 119, 128, 131, 142, 156, 157, 261, 273, 297, 355, 383, 384, 417, 419, 421, 432, 433, 456, 906

Quiet in the land, 156, 157, 207, 381

Raduga (Publishing house), 555, 570, 834, 835, 838, 841, 883

Railroad, 182, 183, 561

Rational/ Rationalism/ Rationalists, 34, 107, 212, 442, 699, 786, 978

Rebaptism, 4, 62, 256, 331, 392

Reconciliation, 444, 445

Red Cross, 541, 556, 829, 830, 831

Redemption — See also Salvation, 16, 215, 219, 264

Reformation, 42, 72, 172, 173

Religion in schools, 693, 697, 785

Religious freedom — See Freedom of religion

Religious liberty — See also Freedom of religion, 353, 408

Religious propaganda — See also Prosetylize, 630, 631, 635, 649

Religious rights — See also Charter of Privileges, Freedom of religion, Privileges, 414, 548

Remonstrants, 33, 34

Repentance, 6, 8, 85, 93, 123, 126, 210, 215, 224, 232, 261, 272, 299, 375, 422

Revival(s), 205, 206, 268, 271, 281, 282, 296, 498, 508, 511, 552, 563

Revolution (Mennonite attitude towards . . .), 628

Rhynsburgers, 33, 47, 71, 73, 294, 295

Rifles — See also Arms, Weapons, 608

Roman Catholic(s)/Roman Catholic Church — See also Catholics, 11, 17, 38, 41, 63, 76

Rules and regulations — See also Ecclasiastical rules and regulations, 471

Russian evangelicals, 490

Russian language, 37, 97, 184, 374, 411, 479, 545, 587, 593, 602, 604, 628, 693, 699, 707, 710, 711, 714, 716ff., 721, 724, 727, 728, 732, 733, 741, 745, 755, 757, 783, 801

Russian Peasants — See also Serfs, 883

Russo-Japanese War, 585, 829, 830

Sacraments, 8, 172, 634, 639

Salaries of ministers — See Ministers' remuneration

Salvation — See also Redemption, 16, 17, 215, 227, 267, 450, 635

Salvation Army, 282

Sanctification, 210, 211, 212, 215, 216, 217, 219, 261, 378, 420, 456, 523,

532, 701

Satan — See also Devil, 130, 131, 149, 151, 215, 236, 264, 275, 447, 509, 704

Schism — See also Dissension, Factions, Quarrels, Secession, Separation, 33, 34, 40, 52, 109, 141, 384, 387, 390, 446, 447, 610

Schnetke, 623

Scholarship (learning), 79, 335

Scholarships (financial support), 741

Schools — See also Brotherhood schools, Business school, Education, Girls' school, Ohrloff Association School, Private schools, Secondary schools, Village schools, 107, 139, 140, 180, 184, 194, 358, 505, 519, 541, 542, 546, 604, 607, 641, 646, 664

School administration, 790ff.

School Association — See also Ohrloff School Association, 193

School boards, 641, 642, 728, 732, 735, 750, 797ff., 807, 808

School building(s), 196, 543, 642, 706, 714

School children, 696

School curriculum, 693, 716, 742, 750, 776, 796, 803

School for Deaf-Mutes, 654, 655, 801, 810, 820, 828

School for Orphans, 106

School for the Poor, 108, 529, 788, 826, 827

School principals, 723

School-pranks, 732

School rules, 707

School Society — See also Ohrloff School Society, 96, 97, 140, 505, 642, 694, 714

School statistics, 787, 788, 790

School system, 102, 190, 194, 196, 456, 541, 741

School teachers — See also Principals, 35, 37, 42, 46, 50, 51, 72, 83, 88, 101, 107, 109, 140, 156, 184, 204, 543, 641, 689ff., 751, 755, 766, 769, 771ff., 774, 777ff., 784, 813

Sciences, 537

Scientism, 787

Scripture(s) — See also Bible, Gospel, Holy Scriptures, New Testament, Word Of God, 3, 4, 5, 7, 15, 72, 101, 130, 132, 135, 159, 207, 226, 230, 237, 246, 282, 305, 319, 380, 387, 389

Secession — See also Factions, Schism, Separation, 236, 237, 239, 265, 277, 283, 288, 301, 386, 390, 396, 409, 441, 484

Secession or Founding Document, 230

Secessionist(s), 230, 244, 254, 256, 318, 355, 381, 391, 393, 394, 701, 979

Secondary Schools — See also Girls' High School, 110, 113, 136, 140, 180, 203, 204, 224, 505, 530, 542, 564, 709, 710, 713ff., 724, 745ff., 766ff.

Secret gatherings/Secret society, 234, 349

Sect(s), 5, 7, 8, 10, 239, 245, 258, 312, 313, 316, 324, 334, 356, 360, 376, 377, 379, 381, 389, 398, 408, 409, 596, 631, 632

Secularization, 979

Semlianka, 413, 507, 562

Seminary, Seminaries, 35, 37

Separation — See Factions, Schism, Secession, 224, 226, 250, 356, 378, 387, 922

Separatist Wuerttembergers, 227

Serfs/Serfdom, 629, 879

Sermons, 60, 94, 97, 113, 156, 213, 253, 281, 284, 302, 326, 399, 833, 960ff.

Settlement(s) — See also Kuban Settlement, Terek, 118, 365, 844,

851ff., 857ff., 861ff.,

Settlers' hardships — See Hardships for settlers

Seven Years' War, 98, 111

Sharecrop land/Share-cropping, 373, 826

Sheep breeding/Sheep raising/Sheep industry, 113, 122, 182, 183, 184, 185, 187, 190, 191, 504, 505, 705, 879

Shops — See also Businesses, Bookstores, Printing Shops, 643

Shouting (for joy) — See also Expressions of joy. Exuberance, 208, 223, 266, 267, 269, 394, 395, 397, 432, 439, 441, 442, 443

Shunning — See also Avoidance, Ban, 31, 53, 81

Siberia, 117, 129, 131, 244, 826, 846, 851, 852, 854, 862, 865, 970

Silesia, 42, 43

Silk industry/Silk worms, 113, 183, 184, 186, 194, 705, 874

Simplicity, 77

Sin/Sinner — See also Redemption, 9, 16, 40, 103, 111, 123, 125, 147, 150, 199, 215, 221, 232, 260, 263, 271, 272, 273, 281, 287, 305, 316, 317, 328, 329, 337, 385, 390, 391, 396, 420, 423, 431, 432, 440, 449, 453, 472, 558, 635, 709, 856, 973

Singing — See also Music, 113, 140, 223, 370, 380, 394, 546, 611, 643, 693, 715, 970

Smoking, 110, 463, 464, 465

Socialism, 627

Society School — See Ohrloff Association School

Socinianism, 32, 33

Soldiers — See also Cossacks, Crimean War, Hospitality, "Podvoden", 577, 705, 829

Songbook, 656, 833

Songfests, 527, 528

South Germans/South German Mennonites, 31, 32, 34, 46, 57, 63, 171

Spiritual leaders/Spiritual leadership, 91, 123, 194, 281, 327, 470, 633, 638, 748, 749, 927

Sports (abstention from), 75

Sprinkling — See Baptism by sprinkling

St. Chrischona, 37

Statistics — See also School Statistics, 122, 185, 468, 489, 522, 540, 843ff., 864, 865, 866ff., 885ff., 926

State — See Church and State

State Church, 363, 381

Storm and stress, 425, 506

Strict ones/Strict orthodoxy, 171, 262, 303

Strife — See also Dissension, Quarrels, 138, 156, 508, 906

Stundists, 260, 527, 549

Succession of elders, 165ff.

Suicide, 75, 385

Sumatra, 106, 341, 665, 668, 673

Sunites — See also Latitudinarians, 34, 40, 298

Supervisory Commission, 95, 106, 129, 143, 198, 200, 245, 246, 247, 290, 312, 321, 322, 346, 350, 351, 352, 353, 357, 374, 381, 382, 392, 402, 406, 410, 411, 525, 587, 593, 714, 736, 742, 747, 790

Swearing — See Oath

Swiss Mennonites, 34, 36, 37, 57, 74, 171

Switzerland, 14, 15, 20, 34, 40, 47, 49, 79, 293

Sword, 3, 5, 22, 23, 24, 43, 80, 241, 289, 333, 334, 335, 388, 458, 464, 465

Tall Guard (of Prussian king), 49

Tambourine — See also Drum, 440, 452, 453

Tatars, Tartars, 115, 188, 189, 191, 192

Taufgesinnte — See *Doopsgezinde*,

Tavern — See also Drinking, 118, 119, 231, 423, 494, 643

Taxes — See also Assets, Assessment, Voting rights, 74, 84, 613, 615, 616, 617, 621, 644

Teachers — See School Teachers

Teachers' salaries, 753, 788

Teacher training/Teacher training course/Teacher Training Institute, 106, 541, 546, 709, 744, 748, 753, 757, 761, 770, 788, 805, 831

Teaching methods, 753, 792ff., 803, 805

Technical schools (lack of), 882

Telugus — See also Nalgonda, 676, 679, 682ff.,

Templers/ Temple Congregation/ Temple Movement/ Templer Churches, 107, 108, 109, 224, 225, 230, 261, 263, 312, 258, 453, 506, 540, 541, 851, 925, 926

Terek Settlement, 854, 855, 861, 876, 879

Textbooks, 719

Theological training — See also Education of ministers, 37, 54, 100, 634, 966

Threshing machine — See Machines, Machinery

Thrift — see also Frugality, 29, 93, 119

Tolerance/Toleration, 10, 18, 29, 33, 54, 62, 93, 241, 302, 831

Torture/Torturing — See also Martyrs, Persecution, 8, 19, 23, 24, 27

Trade and commerce/Trade and industry/Trades and businesses, 77, 122, 504, 866ff., 871ff., 880

Trade schools (lack of), 882

Tradesmen — See also Artisans, 872, 874, 875

Travel permits — See Visas

Trees, 121, 122, 184, 185, 187, 188, 193, 194, 197, 504, 505, 535, 571

Tsar — See also Emperor, 54, 88, 98, 99, 113, 116, 117, 139, 159, 160, 173ff., 192, 200, 315, 318, 319, 345, 359, 361, 371, 407, 409, 431, 495, 579, 583, 586, 588, 589, 590, 592, 595, 596, 601, 605, 606, 610, 612, 613, 627, 632, 633, 637, 652, 702, 703, 704, 749, 879, 958

Tsarina — See also Empress, 583, 596, 606, 633, 637

Turkestan, 506, 571, 851, 864

Turkish War of 1877-78, 115, 583, 829

Tutor — See also Home tutor, 699, 737, 738

Ukowallian — See Old Flemish

Unification, 491

Union of M.B.'s and Baptists — See also Alliance, 464, 479

Unitarianism, 32

Unparteiische Kirchen- Und Ketzer-Historie, 158

Vereinigung der Mennonitengemeinden im Deutschen Reich, 70, 71

Villages, 153, 188

Village Schools, 698, 775ff., 806, 808, 813

Village Teachers, 803, 835

Visas — See also Passports, 348, 351, 352, 353, 403, 404

Visions, 94

Vistula, 46, 48, 81, 82

Vocational (Secondary) School, 759, 773, 805

Voluntary labour (in building prayer house), 495

Voluntary service (for wounded soldiers), 584

Voting rights (regarding Forestry Service matters), 621

Wagons, 181, 185, 186, 327, 413, 429, 500, 579, 583, 866, 869, 872, 875, 880

Waldensian(s), 1, 2, 10, 11, 14, 15, 42, 43, 47, 72, 79

Wall's House for the Ill, 815

Wandelnde Seele — See *Wandering Soul*

Wandering Soul — 130, 133, 179

War(s) — See also Crimean War, Russo-Japanese War, Turkish War, 22, 33, 81, 130, 583, 587, 598, 831

Wealth -- See also Assets, Prosperity, 31, 77, 80, 82, 180, 183, 187, 866, 876, 928

Weapons — See also Arms, 14, 189

Weddings, 9, 325, 655, 860, 970

Welfare — See also Mental Hospital, Poor People, School for Deaf-Mutes, 809ff.

West Prussian Mennonites — See: Prussian Mennonites

Widows and Orphans — See also Orphans, Orphanages, 411

Wine, 9, 194, 371, 643

Withdrawal, 250, 251

Withdrawal from the Catholic Church —See *Ausgang aus dem Papsttum*

Witmarsum, 4, 5, 14, 35

Wives, 332, 333, 337

Woods — See Forestry Service, Trees

Women — See also Deaconesses, Missionaries, Wives, 174, 175, 193, 507, 545, 685, 687, 816

Word of God — See also Bible, Gospel, Holy Scriptures, New Testament, Scriptures, 4, 7, 18, 25, 38, 72, 111, 131, 132, 154, 155, 197, 234, 235, 240, 241, 258, 267, 269, 287, 315, 317, 319, 325, 330, 333, 337, 339, 371, 375, 387, 389, 393, 395, 396, 399, 400, 408, 421, 430, 433, 440, 441, 446, 461, 493, 519, 553, 633, 638, 664

Works (Righteousness by), 17

World/Worldly life/Worldly pleasures, 5, 7, 9, 22, 59, 77, 92, 123, 125, 126, 131, 132, 145, 150, 152, 221, 266, 275, 326, 328, 337, 375, 376, 422, 448, 510, 518, 607, 690, 708, 787, 977

Worldliness, 383, 979

Wuerttembergers/ Wuerttemberg Brethren, 227, 264, 286

Wuestenfelde, 11, 14

Zionsbote, 522

Zondagsbode, 36

NAME INDEX

Alexander I, 88, 113, 139, 159, 173-175, 192-193

Alexander II, 114, 192, 474, 574, 579, 590, 810

Alf, C. F., 285, 288-289

Amann, Jakob, 40

Ambarzumov, A. G., 810, 813

Apostool, Samuel, 33-34

Baedeker, F. W., 302, 552

Balzer, Heinrich, 135

Bannmann, Franz, 160

Bartel, Heinrich, 284, 288, 513

Bartel, Wilhelm, 223, 263-266, 270-274, 285

Bartsch, Johann, 88, 112, 116

Becker, Benjamin, 273-275, 285, 289-290, 326, 395, 416-424, 513

Becker, Jakob, 232, 242-243, 247, 265-266, 273, 284-285, 287-288, 290, 301, 369-370, 393-394, 396, 404

Benzien, Karl, 459-461

Berg, Peter, 321

Bergmann, Hermann A., 620, 629

Bergmann, Johann, 972

Bergmann, Kornelius P., 738

Bergmann, Peter, 498

Bervoets, D. H., 664-665

Boschmann, David D., 741

Bouwens, Leonhard, 18, 31

Braeul, Jakob, 559, 724, 780-781

Braeul, Jakob J., 735

Braeul, Johann Johann, 721, 729

Braght, Tielemann van, 14, 19, 133

Braun, Heinrich, 640, 650-651, 654

Braun, Peter J., 739

Brun, Privy Councillor, 276, 338, 445, 947

Buliubasch, A., 813

Burzev, Alexander, 737

Busuk, Peter P., 765

Calvin, John, 15, 291

Campbell, W. W., 682-683

Catherine II, Empress, 86-87, 637

Ciechanoviec, von Ciska, 46

Claassen, David Johann, 505, 541-542, 620, 622, 655, 739

Claassen, Gerhard, 568

Claassen, Johann, 104-108, 199, 201, 224, 229-230, 232, 234, 236, 241-242, 244-245, 248, 250, 253, 257, 264-266, 268-270, 274-275, 279, 285, 288, 301, 322, 326, 342-346, 351-354, 359-376, 382, 385, 388, 399-401, 411-415, 425-430, 456, 474, 501-505, 597

Claassen, Katharina, 266-267, 272, 286, 367, 368-369, 370, 374, 394, 412-415, 427, 429, 474

Contenius, Senator, 112-113, 115, 120, 122, 137, 139, 182, 194

Cornelssen, Abraham, 232, 234, 236, 247, 273-275, 350, 388, 512, 518

Cornies, Johann Sr., 93, 95-96, 152, 190-199, 502, 699, 713, 777, 791, 796

Cornies, Johann Jr., 723

Degtiarev, Spiridon N., 738

Deknatel, Johannes, 10-11, 14-15, 30, 34, 99

Denner, Jakob, 293, 297-298

Dick, Peter F., 740
Dirks, David, 674
Dirks, Heinrich, 36, 153, 647, 656-657, 659-673, 834
Dirksen, Jakob, 500, 515-520
Dobbert, Pastor, 209, 225, 233, 242, 249, 384, 393
Doerksen, Gerhard, 740
Dueck, David J., 737
Duerksen, David, 498, 551, 555, 783, 919
Dyck, Abram, 780
Dyck, Heinrich J., 765
Dyck, Isaak G., 629, 647, 943-944
Dyck, Jakob Sr., 95, 123-124
Dyck, Wilhalm, 527, 531, 536, 551, 562, 567
Dyk, Jakob, 123-124, 126-127

Ediger, Heinrich A., 838
Ediger, Peter A., 722, 737
Ediger, Solomon S., 722
Enns, Claas, 570-571
Enns, Daniel P., 769
Enns, Jakob, 92-94, 128-130
Epp, Anna, 685
Epp, Claas, 570
Epp, David, 119, 754
Epp, David H., 640, 651, 654, 779, 837
Epp, Dietrich Heinrich, 118, 765
Epp, Heinrich (M.B. Minister), 280-282, 289, 318, 325
Epp, Heinrich (Elder), 588, 751-755, 808
Epp, Heinrich H., 161, 765, 779, 929-937
Epp, Peter, 127
Ewald, A., 747
Ewert, Peter, 288-289

Fast, Bernhard, 93-95, 102-104, 133-134, 141, 142, 236, 238, 944
Fast, Daniel, 243, 415, 425, 430-433, 543, 919
Fast, Hermann, 739
Fast, Isaak, 541, 557
Fast, Isaak I., 715-716
Fast, Jakob, 94
Fast, Johann, 661, 663-664, 673
Fast, Johann J., 277, 286
Fast, Peter P., 737
Fehr, Kornelius, 562-563
Forchhammer, Otto, 264-265, 344-345, 359, 369, 513
Franz, Heinrich, Sr., 101, 102, 107, 195, 374, 709-712, 750, 751
Franz, Heinrich, Jr., 233, 729, 735
Franz, Susi, 668
Frederick I, 47, 49
Frederick II, 49, 98
Friesen, Abraham, 93, 133-135
Friesen, Abraham J., 674-681, 686-687, 835
Friesen, Abram A., 774
Friesen, David, 258, 353, 372, 398, 848
Friesen, Johann, 238, 255, 534
Friesen, Johann A., 873
Friesen, Martin P., 821
Friesen, Nikolai, 586
Friesen, Peter M., 498-499, 526, 549, 553, 734-735, 742, 983
Froese, Johann A., 765

Gaede, Gerhard, 769
Gerbrandt, Jakob, 969-973
Goertz, Abraham, 629, 640, 651, 653-654, 910, 958-959
Goerz, Franz, Sr., 97, 130-131, 141
Goossen, Helena, 665, 674
Grebel, Conrad, 293

Guenther, Heinrich, 650

Haan, Galenus Abrahams de, 30
Hahn, Senator, 248, 253, 257, 362, 364-366, 369
Hamm, David, 161, 737
Hans, Theodor, 588, 598-602
Harder, Bernhard, 105, 161, 252, 259, 394, 502, 570, 713, 945-949
Harder, Gerhard, 740, 971, 973-974
Harder, Johann, 161, 236, 238-239, 241, 247, 253-255, 350, 570
Harder, Johann G., 739
Hausknecht, David, 777-778
Heese, Heinrich, Sr., 97, 109, 195, 698-709, 750
Heese, Peter H., 722, 762, 800, 804
Hiebert, Johann, 673
Hiebert, N. N., 685
Hildebrand, Nikolai, 736
Hoeppner, Jakob, 87, 114-118
Hofacker, Ludwig, 179, 281
Hoffman, Christoph, 224-225, 230, 312
Holzrichter, Peter, 781-782
Hottmann, Abraham, 740
Hottmann, Joseph, 223-224, 385
Huebert, Abraham, 681, 684-687
Huebert, Heinrich, 96, 104-105, 207, 223, 229, 232, 236, 241-243, 246-247, 259, 263, 266, 268, 276, 279, 284, 301, 374, 437-438, 454, 537-538
Huebert, Johann, 664
Huebert, Kornelius, 778-779
Hutter, Jakob, 20-22

Irle, J. E., 668
Isaak, Abraham, 722, 736
Isaak, Franz, 715, 783
Isaak, Johann, 553, 822
Isaak, Philipp, 279, 425, 468, 521, 522

Jansen, Peter, 591
Jansz, Peter, 36, 659, 660, 662-663
Jantz, Jakob, 277, 449-453, 508, 510, 520-521, 545, 546, 567, 919
Jantz, Peter, 100
Janzen, Hermann, 714-715
Janzen, Jakob, 772
Janzen, Johann, 722
Janzen, Wilhelm, 313-314, 320
Judson, Anne, 286

Kamensky, P. V., 575-576, 578, 584, 585, 883
Kappes, 223, 264, 361, 385, 502
Kehr, Karl, 756, 779
Keller, Conrad, 884
Klaassen, Martin, 232
Klassen, Anton, 115
Klassen, Franz, 232, 242
Klassen, Gerhard, 813
Klassen, Jakob, 756-757, 779
Klassen, Johann J., 648, 765
Klassen, Johann P., 673, 944
Klassen, Peter, 161, 937-943
Klatt, Johann, 663, 800, 804-805
Klaus, Alexander, 120-121, 248, 251, 576
Klein, Johann, 765
Kliewer, Johann, 500
Konstantin, Grand Duke, 588-589, 602
Koop, Isaak, 232, 234, 236, 388
Koop, Jakob, 778
Kozebue, Governor-General, 593, 741, 797
Krassovsky, Yury, 716
Kroeker, Abram, 224-225, 554, 556, 834-837
Kroeker, Jakob, 551, 554, 556
Kroeker, Jakob J., 834, 838

Lange, Friedrich W., 101-102, 357, 709
Lange, Johannes, 107
Lange, Wilhelm, 98-101
Lenzmann, August, 97, 104, 107, 228, 233, 238, 249, 254, 259, 260-262, 376-386, 944
Lenzmann, Hermann, 736
Lepp, Aron, 283, 290, 339, 463-464, 498, 532, 562, 566, 676, 919
Lepp, Peter, 873
Leppke, Eduard, 466, 476-477, 510, 512, 597
Lettkemann, Heinrich, 967
Lettkemann, Peter, 774
Liebig, August, 214, 327, 340, 464-467, 476-477, 515, 519
Loewen, Peter, 674
Luther, Martin, 15, 291

Mannhardt, H. G., 69
Mannhardt, Jakob, 65-66
Manz, Felix, 14
Martens, Abram, 528
Martens, Franz, 921-924
Martens, Jakob, 96, 233, 699
Martens, Jakob J., 826
Matthies, Isaak, 244, 348, 364-366, 372
Medem, Baron, 747-748
Mirbach, Baron von, 549
Moliarov, Mark, 732-733
Mueller, George, 815
Muentzer, Thomas, 2

Nachtigal, Peter, 668, 674
Neufeld, Abraham, 758, 762
Neufeld, Elise, 685
Neufeld, Heinrich, 315-316, 318, 320, 325, 339, 427, 429
Neufeld, Hermann, 564, 566
Neufeld, Kornelius, 769
Neufeld, Peter, 727-731
Neufeld, Wilhelm, 737-738
Nicholas I, 98-99, 192, 579
Nicholas II, 637, 831
Nickel, Abraham, 76-77
Nickel, Gerhard, 667, 673
Niebuhr, Hermann, 873, 876
Nielsen, Pastor, 359-361

Oncken, Johann, 283, 285, 289, 327, 461-467

Paul I, 88, 116, 119-120, 637, 642-645
Pavlenko, Peter, 739
Penner, Abraham, 779
Penner, Behrent, 91, 112
Penner, Bernhard, 274-275
Penner, Hermann, 738
Penner, Johann, 622, 757
Penner, Peter, 758, 765, 779
Penner, Wilhelm, 579, 755
Peters, Abraham, 232, 491, 570-571
Peters, Anna, 681, 687
Peters, Gerhard, 766
Peters, Heinrich, 653
Peters, Hermann, 278, 445, 452, 570
Peters, Isaak, 72-73, 305-309, 570, 591
Peters, Johann, 777
Philips, Dirk, 14, 18, 30-31, 130, 170, 171
Philips, Obbe, 2, 130, 170, 171
Pobedonostzev, Konstantin, 549
Potemkin, Count, 88, 115, 185

Quiring, Jakob, 971

Ratzlaff, Peter, 567
Regier, Cornelius, 91, 115
Reimer, Cornelius, 241, 504

Reimer, Jakob (Felsental), 105, 107-108, 206, 224, 228-230, 242-243, 264, 266-267, 269, 274-276, 285-287, 291, 371-373, 401, 412-413, 416-419, 470-472, 484, 504, 534

Reimer, Jakob (Ohrloff), 498

Reimer, Jakob (Rueckenau), 542, 916, 971

Reimer, Katharina, 685, 687, 772-773

Reimer, Klaas, 93-94, 127-135, 282

Reimer, Kornelius J., 772

Rempel, Gustav, 731

Richert, Heinrich, 784

Richert, Susi, 665, 674

Riediger, Martin, 714, 756-758

Ries, Hans de, 30

Riesen, D. von, 58, 62

Ris, Cornelis, 298

Rogalsky, Johann, 769

Sattler, Michael, 19

Schellenberg, Abraham, 243, 260, 490-491, 496, 523, 592, 597

Schellenberg, David, 256, 497-498, 553, 676, 916

Schellenberg, Jakob D., 769

Schlenker, Sophie, 770

Schmidt, Christian, 277, 445-453, 504-505, 508, 538-539

Schmidt, Peter, 797, 919

Schneider, Gottlob, 141-142

Schroeder, Jakob, 655

Schroeder, Wilhelm, 654-655

Siemens, Johann, 674

Siemens, Peter, 227

Simons, Menno, 1-12, 14-18, 33, 38-40, 46, 65, 129-130, 170-171, 173, 179, 231-232, 235, 250, 293, 305, 309

Smissen, C. H. A. van der, 3, 34

Smyth, John, 294-295

Stefanov, Boris K., 738

Strauss, August, 232, 291

Sudermann, Jakob, 654-655

Sudermann, Leonhard, 586-587, 591, 593

Thielmann, Martin, 545

Thielmann, Peter J., 769

Thiessen, Abram, 591

Thiessen, Johann, 667-668, 674

Thiessen, Nikolai, 664, 673

Toews, Jakob, 233, 238, 249

Toews, Johann, 321

Totleben, Count, 495, 590, 594-595, 610-611, 749-750

Trappe, Count von, 64-65, 87-88

Unger, Abram Heinrich, 267, 279-280, 282-283, 285, 290-291, 315-316, 318, 320-322, 324-325, 339-340, 436, 458, 461, 481-483, 503-504, 597

Unger, Cornelius, 283

Unruh, Abraham, 556

Unruh, Abraham J., 740

Unruh, Benjamin H., 556, 774

Unruh, Cornelius, 555-556, 681, 685, 687, 716-721, 729, 733

Unruh, Heinrich, 555-556, 631, 648, 653-654, 657, 681, 685, 687, 759

Unruh, Heinrich P., 783

Velizyn, A. A., 575-576, 578

Voth, Andreas, 273, 744, 770, 800, 802

Voth, Johann, 727

Voth, Tobias, 96-97, 99, 136, 140-141, 689-698

Wall, Abram, 971

Wall, Johann, 153-155

Wall, Uko, 63

Warkentin, Bernhard, 714

Warkentin, Cornelius, 54, 57, 88, 91, 115, 159

Warkentin, Dirk, 233, 238, 249, 357, 470

Warkentin, Jakob, 143

Wedell, Jakob, 100

Wedel, Peter, 130-131, 141

Wiebe, Gerhard, 58-62, 64

Wiebe, Jakob, 94, 591, 605-608

Wiebe, Johann, 128, 130, 160, 163, 568

Wiebe, Johann P., 92, 605, 822

Wiebe, Nicolai, 70, 668, 673

Wiebe, Philipp, 195, 608, 796-797

Wieler, Gerhard, 250, 274-275, 278, 285, 289-290, 317-318, 321, 325-326, 373-376, 433-435, 454

Wieler, Johann, 277-279, 286, 338, 433-435, 499, 508, 736

Wiens, Abram, 232

Wiens, Franz, 681, 686-687

Wiens, Heinrich, 143-153, 197, 357

Wiens, Jakob, 909

Wiens, Johann, 681, 685-687

Wiens, Kornelius, 229, 232, 543-544, 739

Wiens, Peter J., 722

Wilhelm, Karl, 734

Willms, Gerhard, 119

Wuest, Eduard Hugo Otto, 102, 104, 107, 205-227, 263, 384-385, 502, 511, 700-701

Zinzendorf, Count, 43, 981